Teaching as a Spiritual Practice: Cultivating Teacher Presence through Mindfulness
A Post-Intentional Phenomenological Exploration

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[1] Credit goes to Cornel West for the quote: *Justice is what love looks like in public*.

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for being you and honoring who you are through your practice so that we could collectively explore the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*. Thank you for co-creating this work with me. I am honored you agreed to be a part of it.

Dedication

This one is for me.

Abstract

Mounting evidence suggests the pervasiveness of stress and insidiousness of burnout in the teaching profession (Blasé, 1986; Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2008; Eskridge & Coker, 1985; Larrivee, 2012; Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011; Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999). Exposure to chronic stressors can have a negative cascading effect on a teacher's mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being. A teacher's personal and professional identities are intimately entangled; for teaching, like any human activity, "emerges from one's inwardness, for better or for worse" (Palmer, 1997, p. 15). While the inherent stressors of the profession cannot be avoided, this body of work explores how a mindfulness-based training program designed for teachers (*Present Teacher*™ Training) allows them to transform stress into opportunities for cultivating a healthy, authentic, and purpose-driven *teacher Presence.*

"The call to help teachers take a more proactive stance to insulate themselves from the onset of burnout is just beginning to be heard" (Larrivee, 2012, p. vii). This dissertation is dedicated to answering that call. A phenomenological exploration of what it means to *be* and *become* a mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually healthy teacher *through* the stress inherent in the profession holds great potential for learning how to support a teacher's holistic well-*being*-ness and professional effectiveness. This study utilized a post-intentional phenomenological research design (Vagle, 2018) to explore the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* through the integration of different phenomenological material— teacher lived experiences, researcher post-reflexions, and theory. Vagle's (2018) whole-part-whole analysis of the phenomenological material was used to capture several provocations and pathic productions of the phenomenon. The primary research question in this post-intentional phenomenological exploration was: How might cultivating *teacher Presence* take shape in mindfulness work for teachers? The three primary "pathic productions" that were produced and explored in depth through this three paper dissertation are: (1) creating the micro-miracle moment: slowing down fast-paced teacher time to *be* present; (2) cultivating teacher self-trust and intuition in moments of uncertainty and risk; and (3) "burning in" to human service oriented work through the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*.

This study illuminates the myriad ways a teacher's *being*-ness in the present moment entangles with one's trajectory of *becoming* one's most authentic and healthy self *through* the professional practice of teaching. The insights gained from the provocations and pathic productions produced through this body of work were used to make recommendations for teacher educators, university supervisors, and new teacher mentors to strategically create opportunities to continually connect the "soul with the role" (Palmer, 2003). It is suggested that an integrated approach to teacher preparation and in-service professional development that supports the mind (i.e., mental agility), body (i.e., emotional agility), and spirit (i.e., awareness of self) to be beneficial in preparing teachers for the courageous and commendable inner *and* outer work they are called to engage.

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PAPER ONE
INTRODUCTION

There is parable about a young mother who was struggling with the stressors in her life. In this story, the young mother seeks advice from her grandmother about what to do because she was tired and exhausted from the daily struggle; for it seemed that all she did was never enough.

Her grandmother took her by the hand and led her into the kitchen where she filled three pots with water and placed each on the hot flames on the stove. As the pots began to boil, the grandmother placed an egg in the first pot, a carrot in the second, and a coffee bean in the third. After about 20 minutes, the grandmother guided the granddaughter over to three bowls on the counter. She spooned out the egg and placed it in one bowl, fished out the carrot and placed it another bowl, and then ladled the coffee into the third bowl.

Turning to her granddaughter, she said, "Tell me what you see."

"Carrots, eggs, and coffee," she replied.

Her grandmother guided her to look closer and asked her to feel the egg and then break it. The granddaughter noted that the shell was hard to crack and that the inside of the egg was hard-boiled. The grandmother then asked her to feel the carrot. The granddaughter said it felt mushy and broken down. Finally, the grandmother asked the granddaughter to sip the coffee. The granddaughter did, and she smiled as she tasted its richness and complexity. She put the coffee down and said, "What does this all mean?"

The grandmother explained to her granddaughter how the egg, carrot, and coffee reacted differently to the heat of the boiling water. She said that the egg had been fragile; its thin outer shell had protected its inside, but as the heat of the water acted upon it, its insides became hard. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. However, the heat made it soft, and it became weak. The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they changed the water.

"Which are you," the grandmother lovingly asked the granddaughter. "When challenge and stress knocks on your door how do you respond? Are you an egg, a carrot, or a coffee bean?"

This dissertation is an exploration of the invisible process of *being* and *becoming* a teacher much like the coffee bean in this parable— the process of *becoming* one's authentic and distinctive self through leveraging the heat and stress inherent in the professional calling to *be* a teacher. This exploration of the cultivation of the phenomenon I am calling *teacher Presence* is inspired by a great need to explore the cultivation of mentally, emotionally, and spiritually well teachers. As human service oriented professionals, teachers encounter unique mental, emotional, and spiritual stressors on a daily basis. The manifestation of teacher burnout represents a slow process of self "dis-integration" or distancing from one's self if one is ill-equipped to metabolize the stress of the profession in a functional way. The excessively high teacher turnover rate coupled with the damage to the mind, body, and heart of a teacher indicate a need to explore the process for cultivating healthy and happy teachers who teach from a place of self-awareness, self-efficacy, and purpose. While the stressors of the profession cannot be avoided, this body of work explores how mindfulness training for teachers allows them to transform the stress into opportunities for cultivating their unique, authentic, and purpose-driven *teacher Presence.*

In order to engage in an exploration of the cultivation of the phenomenon, this dissertation seeks to understand the way that a teacher's *being*-ness in the present moments of her practice, especially the stressful ones, influence her self-actualization, or *becoming* one's self, through the role of teaching. In this body of work, the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* is represented with a capital "P" to denote authenticity of one's personal "*Presence*." As will be explored in this body of work, "*Presence*" will denote "the whole atmosphere of a person…an atmosphere of their spirit" (O'Donohue, 1999, p. 53). Much like names are capitalized, the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* signifies her individuality and authenticity as a human being that animates her[2] role as "teacher."

Parker Palmer (1997) says that we teach who we are. Thus, as professional educators, who we are *being* and who we are *becoming* in the moments of our teaching, especially the stressful ones, is of great importance. The phenomenological material suggests that teachers are a lot like the coffee bean immersed in boiling water; their

[2] I have chosen to use female pronouns throughout the dissertation to honor the historic role that women have played in this profession and to acknowledge that females continue to be the majority of teachers. I recognize that the field is represented by both men and women alike but feel called to this female representation.

being-ness in the midst of stress and challenge interacts, changes, and transforms who they are *becoming* and appears to have a significant impact on the ethos of the space they share with those they are called to serve through teaching.

This dissertation seeks to explore the cultivation of the invisible phenomenon of *teacher Presence*—an ineffable, yet energetically palpable, state of emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual[3] well-*being*-ness and well-*becoming* that takes shape and is made manifest *through* the stress, challenge, and struggle of human service oriented work. An important factor in this study on stress and well-being is mindfulness. Each of the eleven teachers whose lived experience descriptions (van Manen, 1990) and interview data comprise some of the phenomenological material have completed a mindfulness-based teacher identity integration program called *Present Teacher* Training. Core to post-intentional phenomenological research is also the phenomenological material of the researcher's post-reflexions. As the creator and instructor of *Present Teacher* Training, my researcher reflexions of the phenomenological material are also deeply rooted in my personal and professional practice of mindfulness, meditation, and yoga. Another source of phenomenological material for the exploration of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* is theory, Celtic Spirituality, poetry, and images from Ireland's landscape.

This study seeks to integrate different phenomenological material— teacher lived experiences, research post-reflexions, theory, and images/ poetry— so to witness how they resonate together to explore the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*. I draw on Dr. Daniel Siegel's (2011) concept of integration through this study as "a process by which separate elements are linked together into a working whole" (p. 65). For Siegel (2011), integration is the heart and foundation of well-being. To demonstrate these concepts, he asks a group selected from an audience to sing one note together at the same time. As they sing, you can feel and hear the flat one-noted-ness of the sound. Siegel describes this as rigidity. He then asks the group to individually think of a song to sing. He instructs them to cover their ears so they cannot hear one another, and then he instructs them start singing their song aloud. The audience is hit with a cacophony of

[3] "Spiritual" in this dissertation refers to a connection with the self in away that allows one to move beyond and transcend one's own psychological walls to experience the nature of things (Jones, 2005); "By spiritual I mean the diverse ways we answer the heart's longing to be connected with the largeness of life" (Palmer, 1997, p. 16).

sound emanating from the stage. This is described as chaos. Finally, he asks the collective to sing one song that everyone knows. The particular group I witnessed sung "Amazing Grace." As they integrated their voices through different melodies and harmonies, they sounded like a professional choir! Siegel (2011) articulates this as integration— difference interacting in a way that brings about harmony, resonance, and vibrancy. This body of work is curious about the ways different elements of a teacher's professional experiences and personal states of *being*-ness integrate to cultivate the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*.

In this introduction, I intend to give a broad overview of the structure of this dissertation, exploring specifically the three paper dissertation model:

1. *Section A* reviews the background of the problem that called me to this passionate pursuit of exploring the heart and soul well-being of teachers and sets up the purpose of this post-intentional phenomenological study. In this section, I also explain post-intentional phenomenology.
2. *Section B* details the statement of the phenomenon and research questions that guide this post-intentional phenomenological exploration. This section also provides details about the study participants, the contexts for data collection, as well as my researcher positionality and background.
3. *Section C* explains the process of data collection and data analysis.
4. *Section D* describes the goals, theoretical commitments, and aims of the *Present Teacher* Training professional development program that all research participants engaged in throughout the data collection phase.
5. *Section E* sets up how to engage this dissertation— it will explain the nature of a "three paper dissertation" as well as explain the three "provocations" in each paper that produce the "pathic productions" that frame each paper. It will also describe the manner in which the provocations and path productions are meant to integrate to create a final (for this work) production of the study around teacher well-being and "burning in" to their work: the creation of an *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model.*

6. *Section F* prefaces the "Implications" paper of this dissertation and describes three specific implications for professional practice given the phenomenological productions throughout this study.

Section A

Background of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

> If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make the paper. The cloud is essential for the paper to exist. If the cloud is not here, the sheet of paper cannot be here either. So we say that the cloud and the paper inter-are. "Interbeing" is a word that is not in the dictionary yet, but if we combine the prefix "inter-" with the verb "to be," we have a new verb, so we can say that the cloud and the sheet of paper inter-are. (Hanh, 1988, p. 3)

By its very nature, teaching is a relational profession. Teachers create relationships with students so that students can relate to the curriculum in a way that invites a deeper relationship to themselves, their peers, and the world. While ample research has been conducted about the centrality of establishing and stoking positive relationships between teachers and students, less is known about the criticality of a teacher's relationship to herself and the impact *that* relationship has on all her other relationships her in professional practice. The quote by Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, speaks to the interrelatedness of all things and can be applied to the entangled nature of a teacher's relationship with herself, her students, and her vocation. "Viewed as a craft, teaching is exceptionally interpersonal. The 'materials' worked on are human beings" (Lortie, 1967, p. 169). Teachers and students "inter-are" in that a teacher's *being*-ness in the classroom appears to influence and be influenced by her inter-actions with her students. Thus, a teacher's *way of being* appears to directly and powerfully influence her relationships with her students and herself.

Teaching is not merely intellectual work. As a human service oriented profession, teaching is emotional and spiritual work as well. hooks (1994) alludes to the sacred spiritual dimension of teaching when she reminds us that teaching as the practice of freedom compels us to share not just information, but to share in the spiritual growth of our students *and* ourselves. Paradoxically, the emotional and spiritual dimensions of a

teacher's work is often cited as being *both* the greatest source of stress and the greatest source of psychic reward.

Teaching is a profession that is often described as a vocation or a calling—teachers feel emotionally called to this line of work and believe teaching to be a part of their personal identity. Thus, teaching is emotional labor (Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2008; Larrivee, 2012; Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011). This emotional investment, often referred to as "relational stress," is one of the greatest sources of teacher stress and burnout. Coupled with the emotional investment demanded of this type of work, massive workloads, unpredictable student behavior, parental expectations, teacher politics, time pressures, and feelings of isolation leave our teachers, especially our newest teachers, susceptible to burnout (Eskridge & Coker, 1985; Kyriacou, 2001; Larrivee, 2012).

"The call to help teachers take a more proactive stance to insulate themselves from the onset of burnout is just beginning to be heard" (Larrivee, 2012). Burnout is a process of dis-integration of the self-hood of the teacher that occurs over time, and it manifests as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment (Larrivee, 2012). Guglielmi and Tatrow (1998) report similar findings of teacher burnout leading to teacher detachment, alienation, apathy, and ultimately their decision to leave the profession entirely.

A teacher who lacks the skills, habits of mind, and/or experiences to access her innate resilience, inner calm, and capacity to self-center when the stress of the profession starts to overwhelm her may begin to see herself and her students in a very negative light; to self protect, her psychological body can start to alienate the self and the "other." As a relational profession, a teacher's calloused and cynical attitude toward herself and another, especially a student, can be a profound liability. Not only can this negative and diminished state of *being* impact her relationships with students, it can impact her relationship with herself. Vandenberghe and Huberman (1999) articulate how teacher burnout begins as an occupational identity crisis but quickly generalizes into the entire self-concept of the teacher.

"Working in a state of burnout day after day can cause serious physical and mental health problems, and students exposed to burned-out teacher may be harmed" (Jennings, 2015, p. 39). If teachers lack awareness of the strategies, skills, experiences,

and opportunities to cope with the stresses that lead to burnout, as human beings courageously answering the call to serve others, they can fall prey to poor job performance, adverse emotional and physical health outcomes, interpersonal conflict (personally and professionally), illness, fatigue, depression, anxiety, irritability, and substance abuse (Cherniss, 1980; Ducharme, Knudsen, & Roman, 2008; Pines & Maslach, 1978).

Post-Intentional Phenomenology

In this research, it is my primary purpose to engage with the edges, contradictions, and frontiers of teacher mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-*being*-ness through the exploration of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*. Phenomenology has been described as a descriptive science of subjective lived experience (Schües, Olkowski, & Fielding, 2011) and is a "*working philosophy* that is not only meant to engage, but also aims to provide a meaningful space for philosophical *research"* (Luft & Overgaard, 2013, p. 1). Phenomenology, in its early days, was seen as the study of how a phenomenon manifests and appears. Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl laid the philosophical foundation of phenomenology (Sokolowski, 2000; Vagle, 2014, 2015), and Husserl described phenomenon as "*that which becomes manifest for us*" (Vagle, 2015, p. 20). It is important to note when considering this point, that as phenomenologists, we do not believe human beings to be the primary constructors of a phenomenological experience (Vagle, 2015). Rather, as phenomenologists, we are exploring the ways that humans come to "*find themselves in* the experience...; a careful, reflexive, contemplative examination of how it is to BE in the world" (Vagle, 2015, pp. 20-21.)

How we engage with, connect to, and relate to our world is the study of phenomenology. Phenomenologically, this interconnectedness between ourselves (the human subjects) and the objects in the world (ideas, concepts, things, etc.) is called intentionality. Thich Nhat Hanh's (1988) concept of inter-being provides a contemplative perspective to engage intentionality in phenomenological work—as human beings we "inter-are" with objects in the world in meaningful ways. This inseparable "inter-being-ness" with phenomena, or the way we are meaningfully connected to our world is what phenomenologists describe as intentionality. For phenomenologists, intentionality is not

about the purely subjective intentions (e.g., purposes or objectives) we have toward the world as individuals, but rather the way meaning "comes-to-be" in relationship to the world (Vagle, 2015). "In this way, intentionality means those in between spaces where individuals *find-themselves-intentionally in* relations with others in the world" (Vagle, 2015, p. 9).

Section B

Statement of the Phenomenon and Research Questions

In this dissertation, I will explore, theorize, philosophize, and consider a multitude of productions of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* from a post-intentional phenomenological vantage point. Since the phenomenon is concerned with a teacher's *being-ness* in the present moment and her perpetual *becoming* (i.e., self-actualization), it makes epistemological, ontological, theoretical, and philosophical sense to explore this phenomenon through the lens of post-intentional phenomenology. "In post-intentional phenomenology the goal is to see what the phenomenon might become" (Vagle, 2014, p. 119). Since post-intentional phenomenology rests on the notion that we are always entering in the middle of things and that post-intentional relations *become* (Vagle & Hofsess, 2015), the Deluezoguattarian philosophical conceptualization of lines of flight helps phenomenologists to orient their perspective of "*things* as fluid, shape-shifting assemblages continually on the move in interacting with the world, rather than perceiving them as stable essences" (Vagle & Hofsess, 2015, p. 4).

Phenomena are always exploding through relations (Vagle, 2014), and post-intentional phenomenologists are committed to following and flowing with the bursting of lines of flight of the phenomenon. This focus on exploring the phenomenon's *becoming* as socially situated and produced, not just belonging to the individual, requires the researcher to approach the phenomenon with reverence and respect so to allow difference and multiplicity to be evoked, engaged, and embodied. I am committed to approaching and conceptualizing the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* through lived experiences and knowledge as well as allowing my thinking to be like lines of flight and '"take off' in ways that we may not be able to anticipate" (Vagle, 2014, p. 119). As I explore the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* through this research, I aim to be open and receptive to the ways it might *become* through the bursting

forth of lines of flight that "resist the tying down of lived experience and knowledge" (Vagle, 2014, p. 135).

Research questions. The following research questions guide this post-intentional phenomenological exploration:

Primary Phenomenological Question:

> *How might cultivating "teacher Presence" take shape in mindfulness work for teachers?*

Secondary Question(s):

> *How might mindfulness activities, Celtic Spirituality, John O'Donohue's Threshold theory, Deleuze and Guattari's "thinking with desire" and Barad's "thinking with intra-action" theories, researcher observations of the embodiment and enactment of mindfulness activities for teachers, and the researcher's personal experiences with cultivating "teacher Presence" produce and shape the phenomenon?*

Study Participants and Contexts for Data Collection

Eleven public school teachers in a large mid-western city with a range of one to 35+ years experience in the field of education accepted the invitation to participate in this research study. There were three different contexts for this research. The first context was with a cohort of 25 in-service teachers who voluntarily signed up for participation in a 25 hour, mindfulness-based teacher identity integration course called *Present Teacher*™ Training held at a small private university. This professional development course met for a series of seven Saturday mornings from 9:30am- 12:30pm. The second context for this research study was with pre-service and first year urban teachers from a large public district teacher training residency program. All pre-service residents in the residency training program received a "low-dose," 9 hour *Present Teacher*™ Training curriculum. The one-hour training occurred once per month (September 2016- May 2017) during the residents' monthly cohort meetings. Cohort one residents who were in their first year of teaching were offered this same 9 hour *Present Teacher*™ Training curriculum once a month during an evening professional development series gathering. The third context for this research was in an elementary school in suburb of the large mid-western city. All licensed teachers at this school site had the opportunity to voluntarily sign-up to participate in an academic year-long (9 month), 22 hour *Present Teacher*™ Training program at their school site.

Researcher Positionality and Background

Although I am the primary researcher as well as curriculum designer and course instructor for the *Present Teacher™* professional development training, I do not serve in any supervisory or evaluative role for participating teachers (i.e., no grades were assigned for this type of professional development program.). Teachers received Continuing Education Units (CEUs) based on the number of face-to-face hours they attended. All teachers and research participants engaging in the *Present Teacher™* professional development training were made aware that I was assuming the role of participant observer as the researcher:

> As a participant, the researcher assumes the role of an inside observer who engages in activities at the study site and records information at the same time as participating in activities. This role offers opportunities to see experiences from the view of the participants to truly learn about a situation. (Clark & Creswell, 2010, p. 261)

Since I, too, am a teacher in these contexts, my experience of both embodying the phenomenon and observing teachers' experiences with cultivating *teacher Presence* are important phenomenological material. As the researcher and participant observer, I was cognizant and intentionally reflexive of the ways I positioned myself in this space as the mindfulness teacher, course designer, peer, colleague, friend, researcher, doctoral student, educational professional, and fellow human being.

I feel particularly prepared and qualified for this research—personally, professionally, intellectually, and spiritually. As a veteran teacher with over two decades of experience both in the field as a public school middle teacher and as a university teacher educator, I intimately know teacher stress and burnout. I have lived experience and embodied knowing of what it feels like to stand at the point of intersection in classroom where the public and private meet (Palmer, 1997), where my identity and integrity as a person intersect with my professional identity to create a *teacher Presence*.

As a mindfulness, meditation, and yoga practitioner, I also intimately know in my *being-ness* how to make contact with the part of me that is infinitely well. My daily commitment to mindfulness practices allows me to practice what I preach to teachers—self-love, self-compassion, and self-reverence. My personal practice is my on-going, daily research of what it means to *be* human, to *be* present, and to *be* (especially in

moments of stress and chaos) the individual I most desire and aspire to *become* both personally and professionally.

Section C

Process of Data Collection and Analysis

I use Vagle's (2018) five-component process for conducting this post-intentional phenomenological exploration of the cultivation of *teacher Presence.* These five components are: Component #1: Identify a Post-Intentional Phenomenon in Context(s) around a Social Issue; Component #2: Devise a Clear, Yet Flexible Process for Gathering Empirical Material Appropriate for the Phenomenon Under Investigation; Component #3: Make a Post-Reflexion Plan; Component #4: Explore the Post-Intentional Phenomenon Using Theory, Phenomenological Material, and Post-Reflexions; Component #5: Craft a Text that Engages the Productions and Provocations of the Post-Intentional Phenomenon in Context(s) around a Social Issue.

Data Sources

Component #2: Devise a Clear, Yet Flexible Process for Gathering Empirical Material Appropriate for the Phenomenon Under Investigation. With my eleven participants and myself as participant observer, I have determined that the following data sources would best help me explore the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*.

Primary Research Questions	Data Sources
Q 1: *How might cultivating teacher Presence take shape in mindfulness work for teachers?*	✧ Transcripts from audio-recorded individual interviews conducted with research participates ✧ Participants LEDs (lived experience descriptions) ✧ Written personal reflections, work samples and visual artifacts shared by participants throughout the *Present Teacher* course ✧ Researcher direct observations/ field notes of mindfulness sessions ✧ Researcher's post-reflexion journal ✧ Focus group interview ✧ Post-Course Survey
Q 2: *How might mindfulness activities, Celtic Spirituality, John O'Donohue's Threshold theory, Deleuze and Guattari's "thinking with desire" and Barad's "thinking with intra-action" theories, researcher observations of the embodiment and enactment of mindfulness activities for teachers, and the researcher's personal experiences with cultivating teacher Presence produce and shape the phenomenon of teacher Presence?*	✧ Researcher personal written and audio post-reflexion journal ✧ Researcher direct observations/ field notes of mindfulness sessions ✧ Researcher LEDs (lived experience descriptions) ✧ Thinking with Theory theoretical productions

Table 1.1 Research Question and Data Sources

Researcher Initial Post-Reflexion Statement & Post Reflexion Plan

Component #3: Make a Post-Reflexion Plan will guide my next step in my process of data collection. Vagle (2014) contends that even though it is difficult to pinpoint the most important component of the post-intentional approach, this component in particular is critical. Researcher reflexivity describes the way the researcher "can learn to pay careful attention to the complex socially constructed ways in which reality get *framed* through one's researching and writing as a qualitative researcher—stressing that what we assert is always, already framed in ways for which we may not be aware" (Vagle & Hofsess, 2015, p. 4; Davies & Gannon, 2006; Lather, 1993; Macbeth, 2001). Seeing what frames how and what we see (Lather, 1993) as researchers is a crucial component of post-intentional phenomenological research.

Prior to conducting any research on the phenomenon, I created space to write an initial post-reflexion statement. This statement described and detailed my role as a teacher educator, mindfulness/yoga practitioner and teacher, and researcher. This statement was akin to a meditation where I allowed my thoughts, beliefs, assumptions of normality, and bottom-lines around the phenomena under exploration to surface so to explore them non-judgmentally. "Examining your own assumptions gives you a better chance of taking hold of them, rather than the assumptions taking hold of you and in turn the phenomenon under investigation" (Vagle, 2014, p. 133).

My post-reflexion plan is an intimate, integral, and deeply inter-connected element of my data collection that allows me to systematically drop into the middle of things (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). In this way, I can engage with my reflexivities as swells of intensities (Vagle & Hofesses, 2015). Since I am not a stable subject researching a stable phenomenon, I make a self-reflexive commitment to engaging, exploring, and documenting complex, shape-shifting reflexivities as "key spaces of production in which bodies (of data) are consequently marked, violated, disciplined AND celebrated, honored, and nurtured" (Vagle & Hofesses, 2015, p. 4). I will be post-reflexing at many different moments throughout my data collection—before and after interviews; before, amidst, and after mindfulness sessions with teachers; before, during, and after my teaching of CI 1001 (Introduction to Elementary Education course I teach at a large research institution); when I observe or experience the *Presence* of a teacher when

I am the student in the class; as I write about the phenomenon during my preliminary exams; as I read anything and everything by John O'Donohue; and before, during, and after my "soul-batical" to Ireland.

Process of Data Analysis

Component #4: Explore the Post-Intentional Phenomenon Using Theory, Phenomenological Material, and Post-Reflexions.

I use Vagle's (2014, 2018) post-intentional phenomenological analysis method to read and write my way through the phenomenological material and data in a systematic, responsive manner. "As phenomenologists, we are actively engaged in crafting something, and as we engage in craftwork, we need to resist the urge to follow a recipe, and instead, embrace the open searching, tinkering, and reshaping that this important work requires" (Vagle, 2014, p. 104). In effort to engage and dwell with the data in an active, reflective, and meditative way, I use Vagle's (2018) "whole-part-whole" analysis process to analyze each piece of data. In this analysis process, I engage in a holistic reading of the each piece of data and carry out a careful line-by-line reading with text marking and margin note-taking. I am then asked to *think with theory, my post-reflexions, and analyzed phenomenological material* of the phenomenon of *cultivating teacher Presence*. During the data analysis phase, I am particularly mindful and attentive to both the "whole-part-whole" analysis alongside my post-reflexive journal to contemplate the following question posed by Vagle (2014) about the data: *What doesn't seem to fit? If I follow this 'mis-fit' notion, idea, insight, perspective, what might I learn about the phenomenon that is not yet think-able?* (p. 135).

In addition, in an attempt to honor and engage the complexities, density, and multi-faceted layers of this post-intentional phenomenological exploration of the cultivation of *teacher Presence*, when I explore the interview data, I will be using "diffractive analysis" and thinking with theory practices outlined in *Thinking with Theory in Qualitative Research* (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) to center my analysis in an onto-epistemological grounding. Onto-epistemology, as the study of *"knowing in being,"* assumes that the "*practices of knowing and being are not isolable; they are mutually implicated*" (p. 120). In this way, knowing and *being* are understood as interdependent and entangled and mutually implicated and constitutive (Mazzei, 2014).

As will be explored and explained in more depth throughout Paper Two of this dissertation, as I engage the data through diffractive analysis, I will attempt to be in full awareness of the ways my "bodymind" is both engaging and interfering with the data. Through this embodied involvement with the data, diffractive analysis becomes embodied engagement with the materiality of the research data: a *becoming-with* the data as researcher" (Taguchi, 2012, p. 265). I will be using diffraction as a methodological practice of analyzing the phenomenological material to disrupt more traditional and habitual normative qualitative analysis readings toward a more "diffractive reading that spreads thought in unpredictable patterns producing different knowledge" (Mazzei, 2014, p. 724).

Orienting myself as the researcher onto-epistemologically in my thinking with theory and data, I seek to use my entire mind/body *being*-ness to extend an understanding the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* not for the purpose of essentializing it but rather to explore the inter-connected, entangled constructions that are simultaneously materially and discursively produced. While there are multiple theories I could mobilize in my analysis, I will be using Barad's (2007) "thinking with intra-action" and Deleuze's (1987) "thinking with desire" to explore and analyze my data to put to work a diffractive reading so to become more attuned to and aware of the ways theory and data make and re-make each other. For Barad, "intra-action" refers to the "relationships between multiple bodies (human and non-human) that are understood *not* to have clear or distinct boundaries from one another: rather they are always affecting our being affected by each other in an interdependent and mutual relationship as conditions for their existence" (Taguchi, 2012, p. 271). As part of this *thinking with intra-action* and reading the interview data diffractively, I will remain attentive and deliberate in my post-reflexions of the analysis process to ask myself how I am being impacted by my encounters with the data.

For Deleuze and Guattari, "desire is about production. Desire's production is active, becoming and transformative. It produces out of a multiplicity of forces" (Mazzei, 2014, p. 744). Given the phenomenon and its inter-connectedness with radical love, eros (i.e., desire), self-actualization, spiritual growth, and *becoming*, these two specific

theoretical concepts feel most appropriate and applicable to this type of post-intentional phenomenological analysis.

Section D

***Present Teacher*™ Training**

Why mindfulness for teachers? Mindfulness-based interventions (MBI) have been demonstrated to help individuals cope with high levels of stress, become less reactive to negative experiences and emotions, and increase the likelihood to notice positive experiences that result in an increase in varied psychological and physiological benefits (Flook et al., 2013). "MBIs are effective in mitigating stress…and show promise in providing teachers with the necessary tools to buffer stress and increase wellbeing" (Beshani et al., 2015, p. 2). Given that teaching is an interpersonally oriented profession where the relationship between teacher and student is central to the job and the nature of the work, the work is highly emotional. The emotional demands of teaching can be inherently stress inducing. If a teacher lacks the coping strategies, skills, and experiences to process the emotional demands and her own emotional reaction to the stress, she is left highly vulnerable to burnout and a host of negative psychological and physiological conditions. Mindfulness-based interventions have been proven to be a useful intervention to address and respond to a variety of psychological problems and have demonstrated a reduction in stress, depression, and anxiety (Flook et al., 2013; Gold et al., 2009). In fact, research has shown that a "mindfulness intervention adapted for educators boosts aspects of teachers' mindfulness and self-compassion and reduces psychological symptoms and burnout" (Flook et al., 2013).

In this study, the eleven teachers received different "doses" of the mindfulness-based *Present Teacher*™ Training curriculum. Three of the teachers (all names are pseudonyms), Hope, Faith, and Thomas all received 9 hours of the *Present Teacher*™ Training over the course of an academic year. They engaged with the work one hour a month in a face-to-face setting and had exposure to an online curriculum that provided additional mindfulness guidance and support between monthly sessions. Barbara, Ryan, Sara, and Beth received 21 hours of *Present Teacher*™ Training at their school site for 2.5 hours per month for the academic year. Aeo, Halley, Kukumon, and Ruth received 25

hours of *Present Teacher*™ Training that was offered to metro area teachers through grant funding. This cohort met for six sequential Saturday morning sessions.

Present Teacher™ Training is a professional development training program that focuses on the personal growth and identity integration of the practitioner. Integrating experiential learning, personal reflection, collaboration, teacher transformation theory, neuroscience, and mindfulness-based practices, educators discover their innate resilience and power to transform the stress of the profession into opportunities for personal and professional growth and self-actualization. *Present Teacher*™ Training is designed to respond to the call to help teachers take a proactive stance to insulate themselves from the onset of burnout and emotional fatigue as well as intentionally cultivate personal *Presence,* self-love, and self-care. Three programmatic goals of the training are: (1) to provide teachers with experiences and cognitive tools and strategies for the cultivation of self-awareness, self-compassion, and emotional intelligence so that they can adapt to the challenges of the profession in a functional and flexible way, (2) teach and engage teachers in learning physiological stress-coping strategies to achieve mental and emotional balance and a deep sense of equanimity for counteracting the onset and manifestation of burnout and emotional fatigue in the classroom setting, and (3) cultivate habits of mind and dispositions that allow them to access their inner calm in chaotic teaching moments, see student behavior through the lens of compassion and understanding, and leverage stress as opportunities for greater personal and professional insight and growth.

The foundational experiences and activities for *Present Teacher*™ Training that contribute to the three goals of increasing self-awareness and *Presence*, emotional resilience and regulation, and self-compassion and connection include both fundamental practices that occur during face-to-face class/ community sessions and through independent "homework" practices that are integrated both in their daily personal and professional lives. The foundational experiences during class sessions that directly contribute to the manifestation of course goals are: formal meditation experiences, space for personal self reflection and journal writing, whole group discussions, and large/ small group sharing and collaboration. In addition, the individual participant's commitment to a daily mindfulness/meditation practice and enacting specific "in class" school-work

assignments into their daily teaching routine are designed to integrate core topics into their everyday practices.

Creating space for colleagues to connect and learn with and alongside each other is effective practice for both teacher professional development and teaching mindfulness, thus the primary mode of delivery for this training program is face-to-face interaction. Engaging in mindful awareness experiences and foundational meditation practices at every session creates space for time starved teachers to reconnect with themselves and their peers, reconnect with their inner calm, and balance their mood. Each session is designed to create time and space for teachers to not only learn about contemplative-based mindfulness practices and cognitive, behavioral, and physiological strategies to minimize stress, but to experience them first hand, reflect on those experiences, ask questions, and share their experiences with the group. "At the heart of the pedagogy of mindfulness is co-creation" (McCown, Reibel, & Micozzi, 2011, p. 114), and central to the *Present Teacher*™ Training is the practice "co-creation" where every participant is encouraged to participate in sharing their own direct experiences of the practice while attentively practicing mindful listening to fellow participants as they share their direct experiences as well.

To foster teacher reflective practice, participants engage in Korthagen et al. (2013) Core Reflection Practice and respond to personal reflection prompts at the beginning of each face-to-face session. Several other opportunities for personal reflection arise during the face-to-face sessions. For example, after specific formal meditation practices, teachers will frequently engage in composing written reflections in the form of *Lived Experience Descriptions* (LEDs) (van Manen, 1990). LEDs are a phenomenological tool (van Manen, 1990; 2001) used in the program to create space for teachers to practice self-reflection and facilitate deeper awareness by having them write about their direct experience of their meditation practices.

In addition to engaging in a variety of formal and informal mindful awareness practices during face-to-face sessions, participants have ample space and time to self-reflect and participate in small and large group discussions. Research suggests that human development occurs on both social and psychological planes (Lasky, 2005), thus teachers need space to connect with themselves and then connect with their colleagues

through collaboration and sharing of personal experiences in order to grow and develop—both personally and professionally. These personal and peer connections serve to facilitate inner growth and change while strengthening collegial connections among teaching staff. Essential tenants of freedom of expression, belonging, and resonance are protected and respected in this space while the three universal, psychological needs for autonomy, belongingness, and competence are honored (Spilt et al., 2011).

Facilitating a mindfulness-based intervention is unique and represents a subtle but critical aspect for the mindfulness teacher—embodiment. "Instructors are called upon to embody mindfulness as the primary vehicle for teaching it" (Cullen, 2011, p. 7). "Rather than 'lecturing' to program participants, the attention and skill of the teacher should be directed towards listening to the rich, information laden insights and examples provided by program participants and then, in turn, to use as much as possible these participant-generated experiences as a starting point for 'weaving' the more didactic material into the structure and fabric of each class" (McCown, Reibel, & Micozzi, 2011, p. 115). In *Present Teacher™* Training, the first half of every face-to-face session is designated to allow participants to talk about and share their experiences of integrating the practices into their every day lives and classrooms that they learned the week prior. As participants engage in self-reflection, share out about their personal experiences, and collaborate with each other in both small and large group contexts, as the facilitator, I strategically weave in relevant readings and intellectual information from educational research, contemplative practice research, neuroscience, and psychology to expose participants to multiple perspectives and insights around core topics. *Mindfulness for Teachers: Simple skills for peace and productivity in the classroom* by Patricia Jennings (2015) is the foundational text for this training program, and it grounds the intellectual and experiential components of the training practices.

Foundational "formal" mindfulness experiences in the *Present Teacher™* Training are designed to engage teachers in learning and practicing physiological and cognitive strategies to achieve mental and emotional balance and cultivate self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and self-compassion. Some foundational activities/experiences are: body scans, formal seated meditations, self-compassion guided meditations, open awareness meditations, METTA/ loving kindness meditations, and yoga. Formal

meditation practices is one of the primary routes for becoming more mindful and the "benefits of meditation are many, including the capacity to pay attention to the present moment, the ability to recognize emotions as they surface, enhanced self-awareness, and stress reduction" (Larrivee, 2012, p. 128). In their book, *Fully Present: The Science, Art, and Practice of Mindfulness*, Smalley and Winston (2010) demonstrate that repeated practice of mindfulness meditation has a host of positive outcomes that are directly aligned with the primary goals of the *Present Teacher*™ Training: lowering stress, managing negative emotions, coping with challenging life events, expanding self-awareness, increasing positive emotions, improved attention and concentration, and enhanced relationships with the self and others.

Davidson and Begley (2012) assert that establishing a regular mindful awareness practice changes, physiologically, how your body and brain respond to stress by strengthening brain connections to reduce reactivity and supporting self-reflection and self-regulation. The first goal of *Present Teacher* Training is to provide teachers with cognitive tools and strategies for the cultivation of self-awareness, self-compassion, and emotional resilience so that they can adapt to the challenges of the profession in a functional way. These "cognitive tools" are specific selective and sustained attention practices, open-awareness meditations, self-compassion meditations, and cognitive reappraisal strategies that help teachers to contemplate multiple perspectives of a given situation. Thompson (2015) reminds us that the self is process, not a thing or distinct entity. Being that the self is a process, always under construction, development, and growth, *Present Teacher*™ Training is designed to equip teachers with the cognitive tools they need to facilitate their inner growth and development in a purposeful way that helps them to learn how to processes the inherent stresses of teaching so to stage off the onset of burnout and emotional fatigue.

The cultivation of self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and self-compassion are three primary elements of effective personal practice that facilitates increase social and emotional competence in the classroom setting while significantly diminishing the felt effect of teacher stress. Flooke et al. (2013) illustrates that a "mindful approach to stress involves noticing body sensations, observing thoughts and emotions related to stress, and practicing self-compassion" (p. 183). Self-compassion practices require that one take a

balanced, mindful approach to one's negative experiences so to diminish over-exaggerating personal pain and discomfort. Practicing self-compassion is the act of responding to one's self with wisdom, loving-kindness, and mindfulness (Reyes, 2011). In order to be self-compassionate, one must first be self-aware of personal suffering and notice it in the mind and body. Noticing moments of personal suffering provides teachers with opportunities to practice self-compassion and benefit from a practice proven to enhance well-being because it helps individuals to feel cared for, connected, and emotionally calm (Neff, 2011).

Another foundational activity of *Present Teacher™* Training is grounded in adult learning theory (Knowles, 1995). Knowing that adults are internally motivated and self-directed, that they bring life experiences and knowledge to new learning experiences, and that they are responsible for their own learning, explicit "in-class" homework assignments that facilitate a connection between their learning in the face-to-face sessions to the context of their personal teaching practice is a foundational design element of *Present Teacher™* Training. Examples of "informal mindful awareness in-class" homework assignments are: *Cultivating Open Awareness in the Classroom Setting, Mindful Kid-Witnessing, Practicing the Teacher Self-Compassion Break, Identifying Teacher Stress Scenarios, Exploring Emotional Triggers in the Classroom, Practicing Positivity In the Classroom, Exploring Experiences of Failure, Exploring Experiences of Joy, and Creating a Before and After School Centering Ritual through Hardwiring Happiness* (Hanson, 2013).

Creating opportunities for teachers to connect and integrate their learning and mindfulness practices into the context of their personal classroom is a unique and fundamental feature of *Present Teacher™* Training. "Activities that are linked to teachers' other experiences, aligned with other reform efforts, and encouraging of professional communication among teachers appear to support change in teaching practices" (Garet et al., 2001, p. 936). These "in-class" invitations for practice serve as documentation of their ongoing mindful awareness practice, and over the course of the intervention, they provide valuable longitudinal data for teachers to reflect on their process of cultivating self-awareness, emotional agility, and self-compassion. Individual and small group reflection on the "in class" homework is an essential activity during the face-to-face training

sessions. Teachers share with each other how their practice is going, what they notice is working well, and how it is impacting their *presence, Presence*[4], and effectiveness as teachers.

When teachers cultivate and establish a daily mindful awareness practice through various forms and formats of meditation, they appear to cultivate equanimity and nonjudgmental responsiveness to both internal (e.g., thoughts and emotions) and external events (e.g., stressful experiences). The second goal of *Present Teacher*™ Training is to teach and engage teachers in learning physiological stress-coping strategies to achieve mental and emotional balance and a deep sense of equanimity and calm for counteracting the onset and manifestation of burnout and emotional fatigue. Yoga (yin yoga, in particular), body scans, mindful walking, mindful eating, and mindful listening exercises are all fundamental activities/ exercises that teachers engage in and practice throughout the course of the training. Larrivee's (2012) research found that "[b]rain research suggests that higher levels of mindfulness are associated with enhanced emotional awareness and understanding, increased ability to control emotional reactions, and greater capacity to alter unpleasant moods" (p. 136). When teachers are able to cope with their own emotional reactions to stressful events in teaching, they significantly diminish the onset of burnout and emotional fatigue. Siegel's (2011) work allows us to see how developing and refining attention through selective and attention practices (i.e., mindfulness meditation) is a crucial element of obtaining and maintaining inner balance. "Mindfulness helps you to regulate your internal state, including your immune system, your emotions, your attention, and even your interpersonal interactions" (Larrivee, 2012, p. 137).

Teacher well-being is intricately interconnected with the mind and the body. Yoga is a fundamental practice in *Present Teacher*™ Training. Yoga means to yoke breath with movement. The alignment of breath with bodily movements calms the nervous system, tethers to mind to the present moment, and brings balance and harmony to the emotional body. "Yoga is a method by which the restless mind is calmed and the energy directed into constructive channels" (Iyngar, 1966, p. 20). Iyngar (1966) reminds of the power of a calm and centered mind: "the mind when controlled, provides a reservoir of peace and

[4] The distinction between "*presence*" and "*Presence*" will be explored within the dissertation.

generates abundant energy for human uplift" (p. 20). Creating and sustaining a yoga practice is a powerful and important physiological stress-coping strategy of *Present Teacher™* Training since it cultivates a deep bodily awareness as well as mindfulness in motion. The practice of training the mind to pay attention to the breath especially amidst physical, emotional, and mental challenge, chaos, and discomfort is foundational the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* as will be illuminated through the phenomenological material.

Physiological practices like yoga, body scans, and walking meditation cultivate equanimity. Equanimity is defined as "mental calmness" or "even-temperedness" even in the face of challenges and chaos. A teacher's capacity to regain and remain calm in mind and body in the face of everyday challenges in the classroom allows them to be fully present mentally, emotionally, and physically. "Equanimity increasingly allows us to just be present with the pleasant, the unpleasant, and the neutral, alike, without getting reactivated around them" (Hanson, 2009, p. 9).

When teachers are able to respond instead of react to challenging situations and student behaviors in nonjudgmental and nonreactive ways, they enable themselves to embody *presence*. They are able to calm their own inner mental and emotional storms; storms that tend to cloud their capacity to see others and situations clearly, thus they are able to being fully there, fully present and able to see and engage with the needs of others. Practicing habits of mind of non-judgment and non-reaction, which are hallmarks of mindfulness, enable teachers to cultivate "interpersonal mindfulness." Teachers who embody interpersonal mindfulness, as described by Jennings (2015, pp. 6-7), embody and practice the following behaviors:

- listening with full attention to others
- present-centered awareness of emotions experienced by oneself and others during interactions
- openness to, acceptance of, and reciprocity to others' thoughts and feelings
- self-regulation: low emotional and behavioral reactivity and low automaticity in reaction to the everyday behaviors of others
- compassion for oneself and others

The third goal of *Present Teacher™* Training is to cultivate habits of mind and dispositions that enable teachers to be fully *present* physically, emotionally, mentally,

and spiritually with themselves, their students, and those they work with. The impact of *Present Teacher* Training desires to directly address the epidemic of teacher stress and burnout. Our teachers need and deserve strategic and systematic support to help them navigate the high cognitive and emotional demands of the profession so that they do not lose themselves in teaching, but rather infuse more of themselves in their work.

Section E

Pathic Productions and Provocations

In order to ground the productions and tentative manifestations of the phenomenon as it took shape through the exploration and integration of the phenomenological material, each of the three body papers flow with a similar format. As a reader, it will be helpful to imagine engaging with each paper like one would while being mindful. For example, we begin by looking at the paper from a big picture perspective, starting by simply slowing our minds and bodies down long enough to just stand still and observe everything around us. It is much like the process during my mindful walking meditation that I did daily on the grounds of Ballynahinch Castle during my "soul-batical" in Connemara, Ireland in the fall of 2018.

Image 1.1 Grounds on Ballynahinch Castle, Connemara, Ireland

As I was walking slowly along a river's path, I noticed the bright pink berries on this bush. I stopped and observed it from afar. This is how each paper is titled—with a

big picture “pathic production” that represents the integration of the detailed nuanced “provocations” that make up that production and explored in detail in the body of the paper.

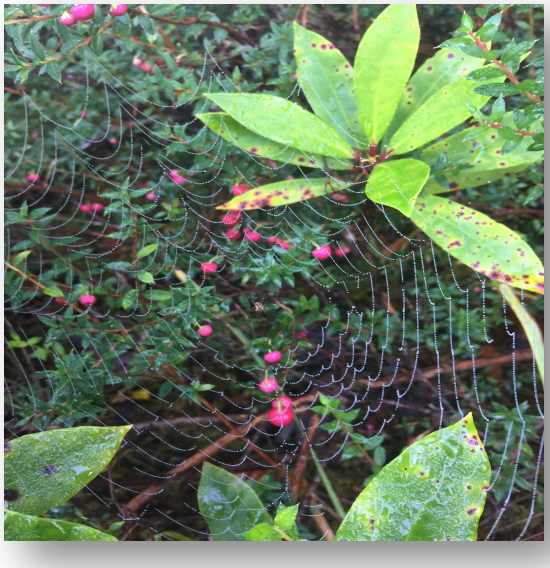

Image 1.2 Grounds on Ballynahinch Castle, Connemara, Ireland

As I got closer to the bush, I noticed something that I had not see from a distance upon first glance; a spider web dripping with the morning dew and spider gentle resting on the inside of her creation. Each paper is comprised of three “provocations” that arose out of the exploration of the phenomenological material that serve to “provoke” the bigger picture “pathic production” for each paper. The term pathic is put to use throughout this paper because pathic (van Manen & Li, 2002) refers to those dimensions of the epistemology of teaching (e.g., empathic, sympathetic) that concern ‘affects’—“affects of thoughtfulness, tact, sensitivity, and an ability to grasp what goes on in the inner life of the other” (van Manen, 2015, p. 42). The term “production” is used to signify where the phenomenon and its meaning, post-intentionally speaking, bursts forth and is produced from the shape-shifting assemblage of different phenomenological materials.

As you read each “provocation” know that they are, like this web, intricately interconnected to the whole of what gets produced as the pathic production/ manifestation of the cultivation of *teacher Presence.* Each “provocation” invites your attention inward even deeper in to the pathic production that was produced to notice even more subtle,

refined, and intricate details about the phenomenon of the cultivation of *teacher Presence* that seek no attention unless you look very closely. For example, *Images 1.3* and *1.4* of that same web represent looking *at* and *through* the web from two different angles. The blue image is a picture taken from underneath the web with the sky as the backdrop.

Image 1.3 & 1.4 Grounds on Ballynahinch Castle, Connemara, Ireland

Different phenomenological material in the form of teacher experiences, theory, researcher post-reflexions, poetry, and landscape images from Connemara Ireland are used to provide different perspectives or points of exploration to attempt to get diverse view of the phenomenon from many different angles as well as to integrate the "provocations" to witness what gets produced.

Three Paper Dissertation Format

A "three paper dissertation" is used as the format for this dissertation, because it provides a flexible format to engage, entangle, layer, and integrate the provocations and pathic productions of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*. The "three papers" *become*, in a way, individual "lines of flight" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987) where the integration of the nuanced provocations entangle to produce the pathic production in a way that makes manifest a line of *becoming* of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence.* The provocations and pathic productions that integrate to create a line of flight allow us to "conceptualize things as fluid, shape-shifting assemblages continually on the move in

interacting with the world, rather than perceiving them as stable essences" (Vagle & Hofsess, 2015, p. 4). Each of the three papers body papers of this dissertation are inspired by three different foci and are written to be generative in that each paper can produce multiple papers for publication purposes.

Paper One: The Micro-Miracle Moment

Paper One is intended to be a theoretical/ conceptual/ methodological piece that focuses on post-intentional phenomenology as a qualitative methodology for studying the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*. This paper focuses heavily theory, Celtic Spirituality, and researcher post-reflexions as phenomenological material to explore the provocations and productions of the phenomenon.

Big Picture Concept Produced: *The Micro-Miracle Moment*

Pathic Production: *Creating the "slow in the fast" of teaching—Teachers (slowly) becoming themselves through being present in the present moment.*

- ∞ *Provocation #1: …Being present in fast-paced moments in teaching can allow for a teacher to slow down the speed of time to….*
- ∞ *Provocation #2: …Integrate intentions, awareness, and attitudes to teach from a calm, open, and nonjudgmental mind that may provoke the possibility to…*
- ∞ *Provocation #3: …Create the Micro-Miracle moment.*

Paper Two: Integration of the Self through Dis-positioning the Self

Paper Two is situated in context of what it means to *be* and *become* a teacher in the 21st Century. This paper primarily uses the phenomenological material of teacher lived experience descriptions (LEDs) (van Manen, 1997) and teacher interview material to explore teachers' everyday work and the endeavor of *becoming* a teacher through several "lived through" dimensions (van Manen, 1990; 1997)— *lived time (temporality), lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality),* and *lived human relations (intersubjectivity).* The exploration of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* as lived through these dimensions allows for the witnessing of the nuances, complexities, and ambiguities in *being* and *becoming* a teacher in the Western world where increased teacher standardization, bureaucratic control, and accountability measures threaten a teachers' sense of self, purpose, and efficacy.

Big Picture Concept Produced: *Integration of the Self through Dis-positioning the Self*

Pathic Production: *Integrating the Selfhood of Teacher In-Between the Kairos Moment*

- ∞ *Provocation #1: …Transfiguring institutional distrust and control may provoke threshold crossing into...*
- ∞ *Provocation #2: ... Kairos moments where a teacher may cultivate trust in her intuition and inner knowing which may provoke…*
- ∞ *Provocation #3:…Becoming the teacher she desires to be through the act of dis-positioning herself.*

Paper Three: The Macro-Miracle Moment

Paper Three explores the epidemic of burnout in human service oriented professions. Paper Three is designed to do the following: be a cross-over piece in that it also explores burnout and its manifestations, implications, and impacts on human service professionals in the field of health care (e.g., nurses and physicians) who are also steeped in emotional, caregiving work. This paper explores, in depth, through phenomenological material, the production a model of human service professional well-*being*-ness; an antidote to burnout. Paper Three theorizes a "burning-in" model of human service professional well-*being*, the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*, as the final (for this dissertation) production of the exploration of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence.* Through the production of *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model,* this paper theorizes the invisible process occurring in the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* by illuminating the process of stress *transformation* that occurs on the *Horizontal Infinity Loop* as it intersects and integrates with the process of self-*transcendence* that occurs on the *Vertical Infinity Loop* of the model.

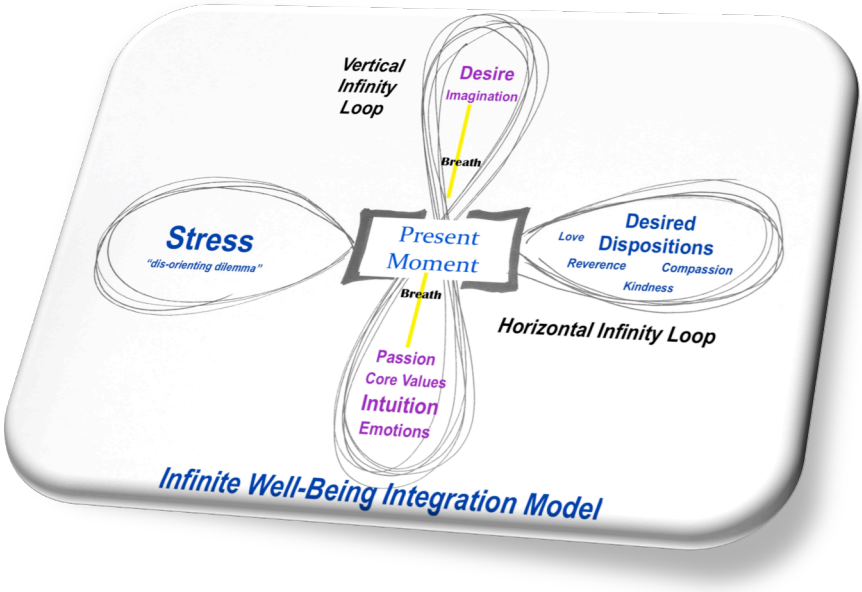

Image 1.5 Infinite Well-Being Integration Model

This paper concludes the exploration of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* by theorizing the integration effect (e.g., the macro-miracle moment) and impact on human service healing and spiritual health and well-ness of intersecting the Horizontal and Vertical Infinity Loops of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*.

Big Picture Concept Produced: *The Macro-Miracle Moment*

Pathic Production: *Burning In to Human Service Oriented Work Through the Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*

- ∞ *Provocation #1: …Leveraging "disorienting dilemmas" as sacred spiritual stress opportunities may provoke…*
- ∞ *Provocation #2: … the Cultivation of self-love through the integration of intuitive resistance that may provoke…*
- ∞ *Provocation #3: …the Creation of the Macro-Miracle Moment.*

Section F

Implications for Practice Paper

The final paper in this dissertation describes three "implications for professional practice" that are produced as a result of engaging with the manifestations of the

phenomenon explored throughout this dissertation. The findings in this study on the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* inspired the following implications/ contributions for consideration in how to train, mentor, and support our teachers:

(1) Contribute to the growing body of research on human service professional well-being, stress management, and self-actualization.

(2) Theorize "integrative" (e.g., mind, body, spirit) teacher preparation programming and in-service professional support.

(3) Re-imagine a contingent and recursive model and conceptual framework for the cultivation and observation/evaluation of teacher dispositional growth and self-actualization.

PAPER TWO

THE MICRO-MIRACLE MOMENT

Beginning "In-Between"

"The fact is that the beginning always begins in-between…" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 329).

> Last Friday I was working on finishing my assessments. I was trying to cram as many as I could into a short amount of time. I was about to call one of my students over to do the assessment with when I noticed he was crying... (Hope)

This moment—a moment of *being* present— can be read as a potentially profound opening for the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*. Hope is a second year teacher in a kindergarten classroom in a public school setting immersed in what appears to be a typical day for a twenty-first century teacher; rushing to finish assessments, cramming as much into a "short amount of time" as possible, and churning through students quickly to get data for the unending demands of student evaluation measures. For many teachers, this rushed way of *being* amidst all the "doing" of teaching has become the norm, and Hope, a novice teacher, could have easily missed the profound opportunity that presents itself to *be* present in a meaningful way cultivates *teacher Presence.*

Hope, however, does not miss it; she engages it:

> I asked him to come sit with me and asked him what was wrong. He said he didn't know how to write his name. The day before he told me that he couldn't find his name sheet (they practice their names every day), and I had meant to print a new one out but I forgot. The printed sheet usually has their first and last name printed on the top and 5 black lines below it, one for each day. I was rushed so I gave him a blank piece of white paper and told him to write his name on it.

Hope's way of *being* in this moment, at first *being* fully immersed in the "doing" of teaching, changes significantly when she pays full attention to the emotional cues of her crying kindergartner. Looking up from her assessments, she attunes to the child in such a way that her *being*-ness appears to shift. It could be interpreted that she instinctively connects with the present moment in such a way that she has also connected to her intuition of what to do in the moment to be most responsive to the child. This way

of *being* as a teacher and responding pedagogically in this moment can be described as pathic—a felt, sensed, relational, and situational knowing and action that is reliant on the present moment circumstances (van Manen & Li, 2002). Van Manen and Li, (2002) say that "[t]eacher knowledge is pathic to the extent that the act of teaching depends on the teacher's personal presence, relational perceptiveness, tact for knowing what to say and do in contingent situations…" (p. 215). In this moment, Hope appears to become present in response to a situation that is not flowing with her expectations (i.e., wanting to churn her assessments out at a fast pace). She pauses or slows down the fast-paced speed of teacher time to *be* in a different way—*being* present with the student, the moment, and her intuition.

This excerpt is taken from Hope's lived experience description (LED) (van Manen, 1990) of a moment when she describes a time she trusted her intuition and allowed it to guide her actions. A lived experience description is a formal phenomenological reflection method that allows for an exploration of phenomenon and all the different ways it produces and manifests itself through the lifeworld. For van Manen (1990), "phenomenology is the study of the lifeworld—the world as we immediately experience it…" (p. 9). Using Hope's description of this moment of trust in her intuition, one can infer that paying close attention to what is happening in *this* moment, with *this* child, and *within* herself (feeling the desire to respond to the emotional needs of the child), that an invisible inner shift occurs for Hope. In this LED, she describes the external embodiment of the invisible trust in her intuition and inner knowing and the way this trust influences her observable actions with this student. It can be read that embodying this sense of inner, invisible trust, she transitions out of a "doing" mindset and into a profound way of *being with* her kindergartener, the moment, and herself in a way that allows her to both *be* and *become* the teacher she desires to be:

> I took a look at the paper and realized how hard it must have been for this particular student to write his name without any lines (most kindergartners depend on that kind of structure!). So I told him we could write it together. At this point I knew we weren't going to have the time to do the assessment but that was ok. I took out my ruler and drew five lines on the paper.

It may be inferred through this excerpt that Hope displays her capacity of attentional agility. In the middle of directing her full attention to her assessments, her attention shifts to notice and attune to the child crying and the blank piece of paper. She then appears to quickly integrate this information by "in-tuning" to her inner awareness that in her rushed state to get her assessments done, she was not able to pay full attention to what this child needed to be successful. I contend she then couples this external attunement with her inner intuitive awareness with a capacity to put herself in the shoes of a kindergartner staring at a blank sheet of paper and *feel with* the child, imagining what it must feel like to not have the support he needed to do his work. Putting all these pieces of external and internal awareness together, it seems as if she integrates them in a way that shifts her *being*-ness with the child, and almost instantaneously and imperceptibly, it can be read that she lets go of what "should" be happening (finishing her assessments) and allows the moment, the student, and even her imperfect self as a teacher who accidently forgot to make the correct copy for the student, to *be* as they all are and create a "mirco-miracle moment:"

> We started to go through the sounds in his name one by one, and he wrote each letter. I told him, "See, you know how to do it!" After we finished with his first name, he moved onto his last name without any prompting. He knew how to write his name, he just needed some support.

While brief and fleeting, this is a good example of a "micro-miracle moment" where Hope appears to create a "slow in the fast…an imaginative space in time" (Dreyer et al., 2018) where she is invited to transform the energy of that moment into a different state. It may be read that in slowing down the speed of teacher time, Hope shifted her inner energy from that of a "doing" state of *being* (i.e., quickly cramming assessments in a short amount of time) to that of "being" present in the moment with her student. It may also be read that in her shift in states of *being*-ness, she created the space to connect with her crying kindergartner in a way that allow him to shift his state of *being* from being upset to feeling competent.

In this research, I am drawing on the "slow in the fast" concept that Dreyer et al. (2018) use to describe the way nurses gain control over the fast-paced nature of patient care by intentionally and mindfully meeting the moments with patients while they "*act slowly in the quick meeting"* (p. 33). "Acting slow in the quick" evokes a sense of

mindful awareness in the fast-paced moments that appear to fly by in human service work like teaching and nursing. I am curious about how mindful awareness allows for an opening to create more moments where a teacher drops out of the fast-paced doing of teaching to engage the moments with emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual awareness.

As I explore the phenomenological material in this dissertation, specifically that of teacher lived experience descriptions, I am referring to these slow-in-the-fast gaps in time as "micro-miracle moments" where a teacher creates an opportunity to transform chaos, uncertainty, and challenge into an experience of growth, connection, and well-*being*-ness. Hope goes on to describe what took shape in this slowed down, suspended speed of fast-paced teacher time. I am reading this excerpt as a model of a "mirco-miracle moment:"

> During this experience, I wasn't focusing on the other students, just this one little boy. It felt good to help him accomplish this task, to engage him and see him achieve. It felt like a real teaching moment because I made him realize that he knew how to do it. Helping a student go from being sad and crying, to feeling proud is the best thing. It made me feel like a good teacher. So often in teaching, there isn't enough time. It was so nice to have this mirco-moment to help him. And then it was over…and back to the chaos.

This paper seeks to explore the ways different phenomenological material, like Hope's lived experience description, intra-act (Barad, 2007) with theory so to provoke and produce an illumination of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*. In addition to "thinking through" theory as a source of post-intentional phenomenological material, I find the Celtic Knot to be a helpful image because it provides a conceptual visualization of the perpetually intertwined and always interconnected manner in which the phenomenon is provoked, produced, and perpetually re-produced in, through, and throughout the phenomenological material (e.g., human lived experiences, theory, and researcher post-reflexion).

Figure 2.1 Celtic Knot

In addition, the Celtic Knot visually represents how the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* in a post-intentional phenomenological study is assumed to have no definitive origin, end point, or essential core. Rather, the phenomenon in this study is revered as always moving, shifting, and shaping itself through the phenomenological material and the researcher's post-reflexions.

This dissertation is designed to explore the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* through theory in addition to exploring teacher lived experience descriptions and researcher post-reflexions so to deliberately create a space "in which all sorts of philosophies, theories, and ideas are put into conceptual dialogue with one another—creating a productive and generative cacophony of philosophies/theories/ideas that accomplishes something(s) that these same individual philosophies/theories/ideas may not be able to do, in the same way at least, on their own" (Vagle & Hofsess, 2015, p. 2). Through Barad's (2014) diffractive analysis, I entertain the insights that combust while reading-the-data-while-thinking-the-theory (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012), specifically Deleuze's (1987) "thinking with desire" in an effort to re-conceive the phenomenon as an assemblage that produces unpredictable insights about the complexities of cultivation of *teacher Presence*.

In this paper, I explore three "provocations" that provoke a "pathic production" in response to exploring the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* through theory, Celtic Spirituality, interview material, lived experience descriptions (LEDs), and my researcher post-reflexion of the phenomenological material. This paper explores the ways the aforementioned phenomenological material intra-act (Barad, 2007) and form

"relationships between multiple bodies (both human and non-human) that are understood *not* to have clear or distinct boundaries from on another" (Taguchi, 2012, p. 271) so to function as an "assemblage" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) or hub of connection that produces the phenomenon's "lines of flight" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987)— the unique ways the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* takes off "in ways that we may not be able to anticipate" (Vagle, 2015, p. 119) and *becomes* and manifests itself through the different and diverse phenomenological material. In effect, the three provocations explored in this paper become the Deleuzogauttarian lines of flight or "flows and swells" that both produce and are a production of the phenomenon as it intra-acts (Barad, 2007) and entangles with and through the different phenomenological material (e.g., interview data, LEDs, thinking with theory, researcher post-reflexions).

- ∞ *Provocation #1: …Being present in fast-paced moments in teaching can allow for a teacher to slow down the speed of time to….*
- ∞ *Provocation #2: ...Integrate intentions, awareness, and attitudes to teach from a calm, open, and nonjudgmental mind that may provoke the possibility to…*
- ∞ *Provocation #3: ...Create the Micro-Miracle Moment.*

Entering into the Middle

To engage in a phenomenological exploration of the phenomenon, both wonder and reverence are essential dispositions I will embody as way to deliberately and intimately "become-with" the data so to produce an onto-epistemological *knowing in being-ness* that is inspired by Barad's (2007) theory of intra-action. My "knowing" about the phenomenon as a researcher is inter-connected, mutually implicated, and continually constitutive with my "being-ness" with the phenomenological material. As a post-intentional phenomenologist and qualitative researcher, I must acknowledge and be aware of the fact that as I engage in an exploration of the phenomenon of the cultivation of *teacher Presence*, I am immersing myself in the middle of its tentative and perpetual manifestations. At its most fundamental level, phenomenology is primarily interested in the study of phenomenon—or as Heidegger (1998 [1927]) said, "that which becomes manifest for us" (Vagle, 2015, p. 20). The unit of analysis in this study is the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*; not the theories that are used to "think through," nor

the individual teachers' experiences, or my researcher post-reflexions. Therefore, it is impossible, nor desirable, to assume that there is a clear beginning or end to this study, or a clear way to jump in into the writing through the threshold of the phenomenon's perpetual *being*-ness and *becoming.*

Like Mazzei and Jackson (2012) in *In the Threshold: Writing Between-the-Two,* I believe that when I enter into a threshold of in-the-middle-ness of the exploration of this phenomenon, I am "instantly caught up in lines of flight that choose [me] and take [me] into realms of new thought" (p. 454). Therefore, I enter this exploration of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* with a deliberate dispositional *being*-ness with the phenomenological material— a deliberate dwelling *with* the data *through* wonder and reverence.

"A good phenomenological study almost always starts with wonder or passes through a phase of wonder (van Manen, 2014, p. 37). For van Manen (2014), phenomenology, as the inquiry into "the ways in which we find ourselves being in relation to the world through our day-to-day living," (Vagle, 2015, p. 20) begins with wonder; a disposition or *way of being* with a phenomenon in a particular way that dis-locates or dis-places us. This dis-placement of the self through the *being*-ness of wonder goes deeper than being in amazement or being curious about what it is like, phenomenologically speaking, "as we *find-ourselves-being-in-relation with others* (e.g., teacher with student, nurse with patient, therapist with client)*,* and *other things* (e.g., a good book, some bad news, our favorite activity, an anxiety)" (Vagle, 2015, p. 20). Van Manen (2014) describe amazement and curiosity as being superficial and fleeting, whereas wonder is deep and complex. Wonder embodies a sense of awe that creates an openness to the world that comes as a result of letting go or going beyond one's pre-conceived ideas, beliefs, or expectations for how something should be. It is in this way that wonder dis-positions us from our rigid and limited thoughts, perceptions, and expectations of what we expect to see, and we open our eyes, hearts, and minds with a "wondering attentiveness that is the trigger for phenomenological inquiry" (van Manen, 2014, 36).

To explore the provocations, productions, and infinite possibilities of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence's being*-ness, *becoming*, and

manifestations, as the researcher, I must dis-position myself so to see beyond the natural limits of my current conceptualizations and thresholds of thought about the phenomenon. Engaging wonder with this phenomenological work softens my perceptual and imaginative *being*-ness in such a way that I open up frontiers of possibility that intend to produce knowledge in unexpected ways. Wonder allows for and invites into being something else to be known, thought, and enacted. In this way, wonder is the state of inner *being*-ness that allows me as the researcher to conduct research where I "be-do-live something differently" (St. Pierre, 2014, p. 4).

As a post-intentional phenomenological researcher, wonder evokes another essential disposition of post-intentional phenomenological research: awe. "Awe is the feeling we get in the presence of something vast that challenges our understanding of the world…" (The Greater Good Society, 2018, online magazine). Wonder and awe dis-position us in a way that allows us to go beyond our reasoning mind. Going outside the threshold of our current reasoning and conceptualizations allows for awakening—seeing something anew from a bigger and broader perspective. Wonder and awe allow for an opening into a new way of *being*, *becoming*, and moving through the way we are living in the world. As a phenomenological researcher interested in studying "how a particular phenomenon manifests and appears in the lifeworld" (Vagle, 2015, p. 23) and through other non-human modalities like theory and philosophy, the unit of analysis is not the human beings in this study nor their experiences, but rather the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*. Thus, wonder and awe open up an onto-epistemological way of coming to know the phenomenon through *being with* the phenomenological material in a reverential way—trusting it to *be* as it *becomes* without attempting to essentialize it.

Reverence and trust are equally essential dis-positions of onto-epistemological (Barad, 2007) *being*-ness with the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*. Reverence inherently honors a thing or person as they are without desiring to change them (or it) in anyway. The Celtic philosopher John O'Donohue (1999) writes:

> Without reverence, there is no sense of presence or wonder… The reverential mind is respectful of the presence and difference of each person and thing…The reverential mind can let things be and celebrate a person's presence or a thing's beauty without wanting something from them. (pp. 76-77)

Wonder, awe, trust, and reverence for the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* are deliberate and conscious modes of *being* in relationship to the phenomenological material that allow it to be exactly as it is without attempting to nail it down to an essence, explain it in its entirety, or confine it with the limits of language so to "know" it. For me, as a post-intentional phenomenologist and experiencer of the phenomenon, wonder, awe, trust, and reverence allow me an infinite circle of grace in which to hold and behold the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* with openness.

I believe that the way I behold the phenomenon will dictate the magnitude to which it will reveal itself to me. If my attitude, perceptions, and openness to its *being-ness* and manifestations are rigid and full of expectations, I do not believe my consciousness could be awake enough to see, feel, and experience the phenomenon in its most magnificent *becoming*. In other words, I trust that the phenomenon knows what it wants to show me through the phenomenological material. I also trust and have reverence for the incredible vastness of the invisibility of the phenomenon, consciously acknowledging that I will never fully know all that is possible of what is *being* or *becoming*. I also believe that the phenomenon will reveal itself to me in direct proportion to my ability to stand back and witness its manifestations through moments where, at face value, it appears nothing is going on. Thus, I am aware that in this phenomenological study, "[n]othing will unfold for us unless we move toward what looks to us like nothing" (Barad, 2007). Therefore I eagerly engage in what Sokolowski (2000) suggests about deliberate, mindful, and conscious engagement with the phenomenon of the cultivation of *teacher Presence;* that I *look at what I usually look through* to see the hidden manifestations of the phenomenon that seek no attention yet are powerful provoking and producing itself right before my very eyes.

Assuming this dispositional stance of awe of the infinity of things is critical to this particular phenomenological study since the phenomenon *of teacher Presence* evokes exploration of the infinite nature of the expansion of human consciousness and the actualization of the infinite potentiality of the personhood of the teacher. "Our longing always stretches toward a further frontier. It is in our nature to seek the infinite," O'Donohue (1999) reminds us. He also reminds us how the functional mind fears infinity, and that it "chooses to ignore the stirrings of the infinite in the soul and will not

recognize the infinite presence in Nature or a person" (p. 80). This phenomenological exploration of the invisible process of the cultivation of *teacher Presence* is an act of engagement with the unknown and a going beyond the limitations of the functional mind to feel, intuit, and engage the infinite possibilities of the phenomenon's *becoming*.

Phenomenology

How we engage with, connect to, and relate to our world is the study of phenomenology. Phenomenologically, this interconnectedness between ourselves (the human subjects) and the objects in the world (ideas, concepts, things, etc.) is described as intentionality. Thich Nhat Hanh's (1988) concept of inter-being provides a contemplative perspective to engage intentionality in phenomenological work—as human beings we "inter-are" with objects in the world in meaningful ways. This inseparable "inter-being-ness" with phenomena, or the way we are meaningfully connected to our world is described as intentionality. The way we connect meaningfully to our world is a powerful thread of entanglement. We may or may not be consciously aware of these entanglements or meaning links we have with our world. For phenomenologists, intentionality is not about the purely subjective intentions (e.g., purposes or objectives) we have toward the world as individuals, but rather the ways meaning "come-to-be" in relationship to the world (Vagle, 2015). "In this way, intentionality means those in between spaces where individuals *find-themselves-intentionally in* relations with others in the world" (Vagle, 2015, p. 9).

Post-intentional phenomenology (Vagle, 2014, 2015, 2018) rests on post-structural commitments that perceive knowledge as situated, partial, unstable, and endlessly deferred. "A post-intentional phenomenological research approach resists a stable intentionality, yet still embraces intentionality as ways of being that run through human relations with the world and one another" (Vagle, 2014, p. 31). Focusing attention on these in-between spaces requires a unique perceptual agility that requires the seer to be an artist with her perceptions and to artistically philosophize, contemplate, and *be* curious about what is perpetually *becoming* of the phenomenon. Taking up such an artistic philosophical pursuit in post-intentional phenomenology implores one to lean into and become comfortable with post-structural values of instability, malleability, and shape-shifting (Vagle, 2010).

"Posting" Intentionality

Multiple intentionalities are assumed in post-intentional phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty (1947/1964) regards intentionality as "*meaning threads* that tie us to the world, and Satre (2002) describes it as the meaningful ways in which we *burst forth toward* the world" (Vagle & Hofsess, 2015, p. 3). In post-intentional phenomenology, intentionality becomes pluralistic and deviant. Vagle (2014) writes about the deliberate move to conceptualize intentionality in pluralistic, multiple ways:

> I think it signifies interconnectedness, moves away from subjective knowing, and allows for consideration of a circulation of meanings... Perhaps unlike Merleau-Ponty, I think those threads are constantly being constructed, deconstructed, blurred, and disrupted. For me, intentionality is running all over the place, all the time…. (p. 113)

Resisting a stable essence or singular intentionality in posting intentionality allows for understanding and meaning making to move *with* and *through* a researcher's intentional relationship with a phenomenon (Vagle, 2018). It is as if there is more spaciousness in the relationship between the subject and object for multiple manifestations of the phenomenon to flow unobstructed. In the spaces in-between, there are assumed multiple intentional relations binding, connecting, and tying researcher, participants, text, and positionality all together. Embracing the multiplicity and situated-ness of the phenomenon in the context in which it is manifesting allows the phenomenologist to enter into a dialogue with intentional meanings that shifts awareness and attention from a search for essence and signifies a post-intentional move toward the partial manifestations that are perpetually making, remaking, doing, and undoing itself (Vagle, 2014).

It is impossible, nor desirable to trace intentionalities if one is to be committed to the art of post-intentional phenomenology. One has to assume an okay-ed-ness with the unknown and uncertainty in this regard. Meanings are always on the move, coming in, going out, and vanishing before our very eyes or conceptual consciousness before we even finish our thought about what they are *becoming*. "Posting" intentionality is a courageous maneuver in phenomenological research as it requires a reverential way of *being* with phenomena, as opposed to looking at and trying to figure out the phenomena in an attempt to name it for what it "is."

In posting intentionality, there is no starting with a stable subject with an attempt to trace intentionality in a specific directedness toward a stable world in order to discover the "is-ness" or essence of the phenomenon. Rather, the "inter-being" nature (Hanh, 1988) of the subject and object represents the "both/and" move important to post-intentional phenomenology. For the subject is not stable—she is *both* constructed *and* constructing, *both* agent *and* acted upon (Vagle, 2014, p. 113). In this regard, a singular intentional relationship cannot be traced because intentionalities are perpetually becoming through the act of deconstruction, reconstruction, blurring, and disruption.

Multiple intentionalities in posting intentionality critiques the "ontological assumption of a subject/ object binary that treats subjects and objects as stable and fixed" (Vagle, Clements, & Coffee, 2016, p. 6). In doing this, posting intentionality brings to life St. Pierre's (2014) call to rewrite descriptions and re-describe the world and ourselves so to "be-do-live" something different. Being-doing-living something different as St. Pierre (2014) postulates is inherent in post-intentional phenomenology. Post-intentional phenomenology is put to use as it creates "dialogic possibilities between phenomenology and other theories" (Vagle, 2014, p. 115), thus a key concept of post-intentional phenomenology is internal dialogism. Post-intentional phenomenology is inherently dialogic because it requires "traversing ontological and 'on the ground' boundaries" (Vagle, 2014, p. 117). As these boundaries or thresholds are traversed, transformation occurs.

In this study, working from the idea that post-intentional phenomena are socially provoked, produced, re-produced, and shaped in and over time, I bring into dialogue theories of desire by Deleuze (1987) and threshold by John O'Donohue (2008), philosophic perspectives of Celtic Spirituality, teachers' lived experience descriptions (van Manen, 1990), and my researcher post-reflexion and personal experiences with the phenomenon.

Thinking with Theory

Barad: Intra-Action. In an attempt to honor and engage the complexities, density, and multi-faceted layers of this post-intentional phenomenological exploration of cultivating *teacher Presence*, I assume an onto-epistemological (Barad, 2007) way of *being* with the material. Onto-epistemology as the study of *"knowing in being"* assumes that the

"*practices of knowing and being are not isolable; they are mutually implicated*" (p. 120). In this way, knowing and being are understood as interdependent and entangled and mutually implicated and constitutive (Mazzei, 2014).

As I engaged the phenomenological material throughout the data analysis phase, I attempted to be aware of the ways my "bodymind" was both engaging and interfering with the material. Orienting myself as the researcher onto-epistemologically in my "thinking with theory," I aimed to use my entire mind/body *being*-ness to extend an understanding the phenomenon. While there are multiple theories I could mobilize in my analysis, I will be using Barad's (2007) "thinking with intra-action" and Deleuze's (1987) "thinking with desire." For Barad, "intra-action" refers to the "relationships between multiple bodies (human and non-human) that are understood *not* to have clear or distinct boundaries from one another: rather they are always affecting our being affected by each other in an interdependent and mutual relationship as conditions for their existence" (Taguchi, 2012, p. 271). As part of "thinking with intra-action," I will remain attentive and deliberate in my post-reflexions of the analysis process as I explore the phenomenological material to ask myself "*How I am being impacted by my encounters with the data?*" For Deleuze and Guattari, "desire is about production. Desire's production is active, becoming and transformative. It produces out of a multiplicity of forces" (Mazzei, 2014, p. 744). Given the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*, and its inter-connectedness with radical love, eros (desire), self-actualization, and the process of teacher *being* and *becoming*, these two specific theoretical concepts feel most appropriate and applicable to this post-intentional phenomenological analysis.

In *Thinking with Theory in Qualitative Research,* Jackson and Mazzei (2017) make a deliberate move to embrace the mangle. "A move to the mangle helps us in a continuing analysis to account for bodies as materially constituted and agency as mutually produced" (p. 123). For Barad (2007), agency is not something that someone has but rather an enactment. Agency is a production, and it also produces. Thus, in my exploration of the phenomenological material, I am cognizant not to "center on [my] research subjects (or [myself] as researcher) as the site of agency and therefore the focus of [my] inquiry, but rather, that we consider the enactment of agency and the co-production of these enactments" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2017, p. 118). This cognizance and

deliberate intent as the researcher allows me to explore with wonder, awe, reverence, and trust the ways the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* will be provoked, produced, and made manifest through theories that open it up and engage what it can become.

The exploration of the phenomenon in this way is a desire to understand how the agency of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* is intertwined with human agency (Jackson & Mazzei, 2017, p. 123). Alaimo and Hekman (2008) explain how everything, both visible and invisible, has agency:

> Nature is agentic—it acts, and those actions have consequences for both the human and nonhuman world. We need ways of understanding the agency, significance, and ongoing transformative power of the world—ways that account for the myriad 'intra-actions' (in Karan Barad's terms) between phenomenon that are material, discursive, human, more-than-human, corporeal, and technological. (p. 5)

This paper explores what provokes the process of *becoming* of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* through its intra-action with human agency and embodied *being*-ness and perpetual *becoming* of the teacher.

Deleuze and Guattari: Thinking with Desire, Lines of Flight, Multiplicity, and Assemblages

Thinking with Desire. Post-intentional phenomenology draws on several key concepts from the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) that allow for *difference* and multiplicity to be evoked, engaged, and embodied. Deleuze's commitment to "thinking life *beyond* its humanized and already constituted forms" (Colebrook, 2006, p. 17) provides a conceptual and philosophical foundation for post-intentional phenomenology to do the generative work it desires to do—imagine the unthinkable, open up to possibility, and see what transforms and transpires at the edges (and I would add, *within* the contradictions) of things.

Desire is about *becoming.* Thinking through Deleuze's theory of desire, desire is about production:

> Desire's production is active, becoming, transformative. It produces out of a multiplicity of forces which form an assemblage. We desire, not because we lack something that we do not have, but because of the productive force of intensities and connections of desire. (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 86)

Thinking through Deleuze's theory of desire as a productive agent that originates not from a place of lack or scarcity but out of a force of one's imagination was chosen as a theory to "think through" for this phenomenological exploration because much of what teacher's conveyed through interview conversations and lived experience descriptions really resonated with a profound *desire* to *become* the teacher they, in their heart and soul, deeply desired to *be*. Ostensibly, when they felt this desire was suppressed or oppressed, a sense of dis-integration in their self-hood appeared to create a feeling of a heaviness of energy that inhibited their capacity to *become* that imagined teacher. Teachers' phenomenological material took shape in ways that articulated and illuminated the rich way one's desire to *be* as a teacher was directly connected to their ultimate *becoming*.

Deleuze's theory of desire was also chosen for this study because of its synergy with the conceptual grounding of the "posts[5]"and the assumption in post-intentional phenomenological that phenomenon are always in the process of making and unmaking themselves and that our knowledge of phenomenon are always partial and ever-changing (Vagle & Hofsess, 2015, p. 1). This conceptual grounding allows us to witness the manifestations of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* as a nonlinear, recursive process where one's state of *being* in the moments of teaching influence how a teacher engages her own *becoming.* For Deleuze (1987), "becoming is *not* a transcendent, linear process between two points. There is no origin, no destination, no end point, no goal… *Becoming* is the movement through a unique event that produces experimentation and change" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 87). Thinking through Deleuze's theory of desire (1987) and the manner in which it positions *becoming-ness* as movement through a unique event that produces experimentation and change resonates with the three provocations explored in this paper—that the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence becomes* and is produced through a "unique event" like a stressful moment that is contingent (i.e., dependent on the context) and recursive (i.e., occurring over and over again) process that invites a teacher into a threshold, understanding a threshold as "a place of great transformation" (O'Donohue, 2008, p. 194), where a micro-miracle moment may be created that further invites the teacher and student into an authentic moment of

[5] "Posts" refers to post-structuralism and post-structural commitments about knowledge.

connection that produces a sacred[6] space for a teacher's self-actualization of her desires so to *become* the teacher she imagines herself to *be*.

Another fundamental reason for thinking through Deleuze's theory of desire for this particular phenomenological exploration of the cultivation of *teacher Presence* is to disrupt and think beyond the liner, stage-based theories of teacher growth and dispositional development to reimagine a discourse around teaching *being*-ness and *becoming* that is contingent and recursive. In, *Act Your Age: A cultural construction of adolescence,* Lesko (2001) claims "a recursive view of growth and change directs us to look at local contexts and specific actions of [people], without the inherent evaluation of steps, stages, and socialization" (p. 196). Making use of Lesko's (2001) contingent and recursive conception of growth and change invites teacher educators to re-conceptualize teacher dispositional growth beyond the framework of stages or distinct phases. This lens invites us to validate and attempt to illuminate the invisible, intricate, and contextual process of looking clearly at oneself in relationship to the other in a specific moment (e.g., contingent) so to self-actualize and move beyond one's current edge of self-awareness (or lack of self-awareness) in order to gain insight into the self that then moves one into more expansive ways of *being* as a teacher.

"What does desire produce? How does desire work?" As I explore the three provocations in this paper, these are the primary question in which I put Deleuze's thinking with desire to work. For Deleuze, and the aims of this phenomenological exploration, thinking through desire expands possibilities to explore the power of desire is a persistent force, a "coming together of forces/ drives/ intensities that produce something" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 93). For this exploration, I put Deleuze's theory of desire to work on the three provocations to explore how desire produces a teacher's *being*-ness in the present moment and the way this *being*-ness, which is intimately connected to her desires and imagination of who she wants to *be* as a teacher, produces and influences who she *becomes.*

Lines of Flight. Central to post-intentional phenomenology are the Deleuzoguattarian concepts of lines of flight, assemblages, and rhizomes. Concepts are helpful because they

[6] "Sacred" in this context is intended to evoke a secular spiritual space to connect with/align with the self rather than to evoke a religious affiliation.

slow us down so we can open up to phenomena in different ways (St. Pierre, 2014). Since post-intentional phenomenology rests on the notion that we are always entering in the middle of things and that post-intentional relations *become* (Vagle & Hofsess, 2015), Deleuzoguattarian philosophical conceptualization of lines of flight helps phenomenologists to orient their perspective of "*things* as fluid, shape-shifting assemblages continually on the move in interacting with the world, rather than perceiving them as stable essences" (Vagle & Hofsess, 2015, p. 4). As a philosophical construct, lines of flight evoke an elusive, shape-shifting, entangling, and fleeing feel and energy to the phenomenon. It helps us, as post-intentional phenomenologists, feel our way through our chasing down of a phenomenon's perpetually free-flowing assemblage in the process of its *becoming*.

Lines of flight is a Deleuzoguattarian concept that no only slows one down and reorients one's thinking, it provokes a *thinking beyond* one's experience of the phenomenon and breaking free from of the shackles of binary, either/or logic. Phenomena are always exploding through relations (Vagle, 2014), and as post-intentional phenomenologists committed to following and flowing with the bursting of lines of flight, we think differently about phenomena. We go beyond conceptualizing phenomena through lived experience and knowledge, and we allow our thinking to be like lines of flight and '"take off' in ways that we may not be able to anticipate" (Vagle, 2014, p. 119). Colebrook (2006) says

> Deleuze will argue that the syntheses beyond finite and bounded forms unhinges the subject, producing discordance and a shock to thought. Far from giving us the feeling of an underlying harmony or reasoning subject, the synthesis can be liberated from an 'image of thought' and extended beyond the human point of view. (p. 151)

Liberating oneself from an image of thought and extending thinking beyond the human point of view is inherent in post-intentional phenomenology. Concepts like lines of flight are useful to phenomenologists because "it can help us see philosophically-oriented work as generative, creative, and complicated" (Vagle, 2014, p. 118). As we engage this boundless thinking capacity, we create space to see what the phenomenon might become through the bursting forth of lines of flight that "resist the tying down of lived experience and knowledge" (Vagle, 2014, p. 135). This space is a necessary

condition for the *becoming* or production of a phenomenon. The beauty of lines of flight in phenomenological work is that they evoke reverence and respect as they "aim to flee the tight boundaries of any theoretical framework and method" (Vagle, 2014, p. 119), simultaneously luring us as craftspeople to also flee the pull to rigidity and structure and embrace the tension as the flights of intentionalities swell and serge with varying intensities (Vagle, 2014).

Multiplicity and Assemblages. Deleuzoguattarian concepts privilege how things are inter-connected. Post-intentional phenomenology pays particular attention to the connections, or multiple intentionalities, in the spaces between assumed unstable, partial, and shape-shifting subjects, objects, ideas, and beliefs. In post-intentional phenomenology, the phenomenologist's art is to follow the phenomenon's lines of flight that are perpetually fleeing and bursting through relations. In doing so, we enter into the shape-shifting assemblages, the inter-connected, gnarled, lines of flight that are perpetually moving and interacting with the world and us. Shape shifting assemblages in post-intentional phenomenology require us to conceptualize a phenomenon in its multiplicity as opposed to seeking a singular essential nature. For Deleuze and Guattari (1980/ 1987), "[a] multiplicity has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing the nature (the laws of combination therefore increase in number as the multiplicity grows)" (p. 8).

Conceiving of phenomena as always intricately intertwined helps us to see that when we engage with phenomena, we enter in the middle of deeply entangled assemblages which is "precisely this increase in the dimensions of multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/ 1987, p. 8). Exploring this expansive connectedness that represents a phenomenon's perpetual *becoming* is how post-intentional phenomenologists practice phenomenological research.

Provocation #1: …Being present in fast-paced moments in teaching can allow for a teacher to slow down the speed of time….

When I asked Taylor, a first year teacher, to define *presence*[7], she said, "I define *presence* as being aware of your awareness." I then asked her, "What gets in the way of this kind of *presence* for you as a teacher?" She immediately responded with one word: "Time."

"In our society, time has become one of our biggest stressors" (p. 349), says Kabat-Zinn (1990). Time stress is also a primary stressor in the teaching profession. Current research indicates that teaching is one of the "high stress" professions that is linked to physical and psychological distress (Dunham & Varma, 1998; Hastings & Bham, 2003; Kyriacou, 2000). Researchers have identified a diverse set of factors that contribute to the stress felt by teachers. Cutting across multiple sources of research on teacher stress, one factor that shows up most predominantly is time stress (Blasé, 1986; Chan, 2010; Kyriacou, 2000; Larrivee, 2012).

In his 2015 interview with Krista Tippett on her NPR *On Being* Podcast series, O'Donohue (2015) discusses our unhealthy relationship and perspective of time. He suggests that, philosophically:

> stress is a perverted relationship with time. So that rather than being a subject of your own time, you have become its victim and target. Time has become routine, and you haven't had a true moment for yourself to relax in and just be. (audio clip)

Many teachers in this study, as well as the many more with whom I engage with through *Present Teacher*™ Training, cite lack of time as being their number one stressor in the profession. For example, during a large group discussion about the origins of teacher stress in a training session, a third grade teacher shared with the group that she felt that she could spend all of her time doing all the things that teaching required her to "do" on a daily basis and not teach a single child that day.

The most common responses on an entry survey given at the onset of *Present Teacher*™ Training to the question, *What do you find most stressful about teaching?* often are:

"The pressure of staying on schedule and being penalized if you don't."

[7] In this body of work, *presence* (lower case *p*) is conceptualized as one's present moment state of *being*-ness. It will be explored and taken up throughout the dissertation the way a teacher's *presence* is intimately interrelated to the cultivation of *teacher Presence* (upper case *P*).

> "Getting all the tasks done."
> "Lack of time to do everything I need to do and having more piled on."
> "The amount of multi-tasking that is required. Letting things go for another day."
> "Non-stop multitasking."
> "The demands on time and expectations of how much must be done."
> "Trying to balance the demands."
> "The amount of work/expectations (both external and internal) vs. the amount of time."
> "Not enough time to do the job I really want to do- and I put in many extra hours."
> "All of the demands placed on us by the district/state and the ones I place on myself."

Based on this particular phenomenological material, it appears that teachers may find themselves feeling chronically time starved. The perception appears to be that stress equals too many demands in a short amount of time that exceed one's capacity to meet the demands. It can be inferred that when teachers feel a distorted sense of time between what is expected of them and amount of time they have to do it, a pervasive sense of needing to move rapidly through their work may diminish their capacity to be fully present in their teaching.

Dreyer et al. (2018) speak to this *never-enough* sense of time in healthcare systems as a "pervaded sense of busyness [that is] heavily influenced by values that are measureable and reflect effectiveness" (p. 33). Given the phenomenological material from teacher responses about their biggest stressors in the profession, it appears that teachers are susceptible to falling into the busyness mindset as a result of the increased evaluation and assessment measures placed on them much like Dreyer et al. (2018) assert that nurses do. Arguably, teachers are equally susceptible to busyness becoming a their *mode of being* with the students they teach like the nurses with the patients under their care. Dreyer et al. (2018) explain:

> What characterizes that being is that you cease to notice how this mode of being affects the whole body and the bodies of the patients we nurse. Being busy has instead become a way of living that is controlled by enterprise (as cited in Martinsen, 2012). What characterizes busyness is an urge to act quickly, to engage in hectic doings. This occurs at the cost of actually being present in both body and mind with the patient. (p. 33)

Ruth, a music teacher who sees students from kindergarten to fifth grade everyday, illustrates this mode of being busy in her telling of a time when she was desiring to quickly "get through" a lesson so to be able to check it off her list of things to "do" and how it impacted her relationships with herself and her students:

> Last Friday, one of the fourth grade groups wasn't ready to 'do' class. I thought we could focus on a small task so I could check it off for progress report marking. It was a disaster. They were moaning. Students got negative.

Ruth goes on to describe how she noticed their resistance to doing this lesson and her strong desire to just get it done, because she felt it was something she had to do, not something she, as the teacher, felt would engage her students in a meaningfully musical experience. She also describes a moment of self-awareness of the way that her students' resistance triggered an inner agitation and resistance in herself towards them.

Ruth went on to explain how in noticing her reaction to their reaction, she tuned into herself and intentionally noticed her inner emotional and mental state to the resistance she was feeling from the students. She describes how she noticed her mind wanting to push to finish the lesson and her body feeling agitated that it was becoming apparent that the students were really fighting her. She said:

> I looked at them and said very calmly, 'I don't really need this. You don't really need this. Let's pack it up and put it away.' I did share at the end of class that I knew they were glad we were done, but that we would have to come back to that activity. I shared that I was disappointed that I was ready to help them and meet them half-way but that they were not ready to meet me.

It appears that Ruth's capacity to, in that moment, slow down the speed of the lesson just enough for her to dip into herself and become mindfully aware of how her mind and body were reacting to the student resistance enables her to *be* fully present to be responsive to herself and her students.

> I felt agitated at first—like—'Come on, we can make this happen. Be like me!' But to look and realize that they are not going to exactly be in my mood state, and it is not going to match, I just take a breath, change my location, and attempt to get with the core of the kids who are pushing the resistance and give it one more effort. But if you have made 3-4 entry attempts, and they are not connected to the learning, they are not connected to the learning.

Perhaps Ruth's desire to *be* present in a moment driven by time-stress created a "slow in the fast" moment of time with her students where she and her students were no longer victims of the busyness *mode of being*, but rather were able to adapt to the moment in a responsive and respectful manner. In her desire to *be* present, Ruth seems to have created an important inner shift in her mental, emotional, and bodily states. *Becoming* and *being* consciously present in that moment through feeling the resistance she experienced appears to have allowed Ruth the opportunity to shift her perspective as well as her *being*-ness in that moment from agitation to calm.

"They noticed I didn't get upset or mad, and they knew that we would have to come back to this," Ruth said. It may be inferred that Ruth's awareness of mindfulness techniques like taking a breath and mindfully moving around the room increased her capacity to slow down the fast-paced doing-ness in teaching to attune to her students and in-tune to her inner experience. Breaking the busyness mode in this moment through present moment awareness appears to have allowed her to *become* responsive in a way that did not exacerbate resistance in herself, her students, nor the learning space. In *becoming* present, Ruth not only slowed down the speed of the space of "getting through" a lesson, she appeared to have slowed down the speed of thoughts that often accompany the feeling of pressure to do more, be more, and accomplish more no matter what the collateral damage on the relationship to the self and one's students.

There appear to be many costs to being stuck in the *mode of busyness* as a teacher. For example, a felt sense of rushing and needing to always be "doing" keeps the teacher's mind and body in a stress-reactive state. Always feeling behind may unconsciously compel a teacher to push herself beyond what is emotionally, physically, and mentally healthy. Always feeling rushed may cause increased tension in teacher-student relationships, because the teacher's relationship with herself is tense. This inner tension often arises as a result of feeling like one "should" be doing something that is not in alignment with how one feels they need (or desire) to *be* in that moment. As Ruth described, she really wanted to finish the lesson, and we can imagine she could have done just that. It is thinkable that if Ruth did not attune to her students' resistance or her inner agitation and/or felt she had no choice in whether or not she had the authority to come

back the lesson at a different time, it becomes thinkable that she could have chosen to push the lesson anyway, increasing internal (i.e., in her own emotional and bodily state) and external (i.e., in her relationship with her students) resistance and discord between herself and her students.

Krista Tippett (2015), in her *OnBeing* podcast interview with John O'Donohue about *The Inner Landscape of Beauty*, describes time as a bully—"we are captive to it," she says. O'Donohue (2015) continues the conversation by illuminating the more nuanced dimensions of time by suggesting that we need to restore an expanded sense of time to include the thought and belief that "there is time for this." For teachers, time can be seen as an enemy or a bully; always alluding us, making us feel inadequate and chronically behind. When Hope slowed down the fast-paced teacher time to create a *slow in the fast* moment with her crying kindergartner, she said, "It felt like a real teaching moment because I made him realize that he knew how to do it. Helping a student go from being sad and crying, to feeling proud, is the best thing. It made me feel like a good teacher." It appears that when Ruth and Hope stepped out the busyness mode of *being* and *became* present, they engaged themselves, the moment, and their students in a connective and restorative way that may be read as conditions that provoke the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence.*

Increased institutional demands placed on a teacher through the many instructional, performative, and evaluative measures may provoke a felt-sense of time being a bully, holding them captive to its demands and not allowing for them to engage the types of teachable moments that Hope refers to in her lived experience description. If "we teach who we are" (Palmer, 1997), it becomes thinkable that we also teach who we are *becoming*. As I engage the phenomenological material and my post-reflexions of what is being produced in terms of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* through exploring a teacher's *being*-ness in the fast-paced moments of her teaching, I become curious and wonder: What gets produced, in terms of who a teacher *becomes*, if the person a teacher is *becoming* through the act of teaching is influenced by a lived experience of time being a bully? For example, teachers in this study and throughout my work in *Present Teacher*™ Training sessions report feeling chronically time-starved. How might this way of relating to time invisibly influence the way they

come to relate to themselves and their belief about their capacity as a teacher? What gets produced in a teacher's *being*-ness in the present moment and her potential for *becoming* the teacher she desires to be if her mind and body steeps in a chronic felt sense of "never enough time?" Might teachers unconsciously internalize the belief that *they* are not enough if there is never enough time to accomplish all the performative tasks on their never ending to-do list? Might this felt sense of not-enough-ness become manifest due lack of opportunities to simply *be* a teacher *with* students as opposed to *doing* teaching *to* kids?

Merleau-Ponty (2005) elucidates how the space we immerse our bodies in affects the way we feel, and moreover, that we *become* the space and the space becomes us. Given this insight, it becomes thinkable that a teacher's sense of *lived time* (van Manen, 1990) can be seen as mutually constitutive. It becomes thinkable that a teacher's perception of time intra-acts (Barad, 2007) with her own *being*-ness and potential for *becoming* through her perception of "enough-ness" of time. If a teacher feels there is never enough time to *be* with students in a way that she feels intimately connected to them and herself in such moment because busyness as a *mode of being* keeps her distant and distracted, it could be inferred that she may feel *she* is not enough[8]. Perhaps this feeling of not enough-ness (Hughes-Decatur, 2011) is exacerbated when teachers are unaware of the power they have to create *slow in the fast* moments in their teaching or their power to shift their perspective on time to be filled with a pervasive sense that there is *enough* time for engaging with students in meaningful and connective ways.

Present Moment Awareness

> Crazy as it may sound, we are going to suggest that the antidote to time stress is intentional non-doing…If you commit yourself to spending some time each day in inner stillness, even if it is for two minutes, or five, or ten, for those moments you are stepping out of the flow of time all together...*Inner peace exists outside of time*...Perhaps you have observed that being aware takes no extra time, that awareness simply rounds out each moment, makes it more full, breathes life into it…. So if you are pressed for time, being in the present gives you more time by giving you back the fullness of each moment that you have. (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, pp. 349-350)

[8] Phenomenological material in Paper Three will corroborate this line of inquiry.

The teachers in this study appear to embody and enact this truth that *being* present in the fast-paced moments of teaching takes no extra time at all *and* that slipping into the present moment gives them back the fullness of that time as they authentically connect with their students. It appears that integrating this state of present moment *being*-ness in the fast-paced moments of teaching infuses it with a richness that Hope describes as making her *feel* like a good teacher. It is important to understand that present moment awareness is not a concept—it is primarily an experience or state of *being* "in which we effortlessly integrate the authentic Presence we are with each given moment we are in, so that we are able to respond consciously to each experience" (Brown, 2010, p. 9). In its most simplistic form, present moment awareness is to be fully aware of the moment one is in as well as fully *become* oneself in that moment.

For example, the moment that Hope recounts noticing that her kindergartner was crying may signal the moment she dropped out of the fast-paced mode of busyness and into present moment awareness *being*-ness. It appears that through present moment awareness, Hope is able to embody what van Manen (2015) calls pedagogical regard and recognition:

> Every child wants to be 'seen' and 'regarded.' A person who is regarded is being valued, seen, known and also guarded and watched over. Being 'recognized' describes situations wherein an interpersonal encounter is experienced as generative: the relation to other and the relation to self; moreover, these two relations interact in such a way that they are formative of identity, subjectivity, consciousness, self-awareness, the development of self, and, generally, the becoming of a person. (p. 139)

Notice how when Hope slowed down fast-paced teacher time, creating a *slow in the fast* moment, she engaged her present moment awareness in a way that her student appeared to feel seen *and* regarded. I contend that her dispositional *being*-ness in response the student's experience in that moment initiated a shift in his *becoming*. Hope recounts how she felt like a good teacher, because she helped him go from being sad and crying to feeling proud. This interpersonal encounter that arose in the *slow in the fast* moment appears to be generative and mutual constitutive for both Hope and her student, because Hope shares how sharing this moment, where her students goes from one emotional state to another, produced a heightened emotional state of *feeling* like a good teacher. It is as if in this "mirco-miracle moment," Hope and her student are both shifting

their experiences of the moment from a state of discord to one of harmony and feeling better— together.

In our interview, I began our conversation asking Hope to share with me what *being present* as a teacher felt like for her. She described that *being* present makes her think of the phrase, "I see you." Reflecting back on Hope's lived experience description of this slowed down moment with her kindergartener, she describes how *becoming* and *being* present in the moment enabled her to embody this "I see you" presence. Seeing this student through a relaxed, present, and open perspective when he is struggling to write his name, she gains greater awareness as she realizes how hard writing his name on a blank piece of paper must be. This way of seeing, or capacity to embody pedagogical regard and recognition (van Manen, 2015) is important for Hope. In our interview about how she defined *presence*, I asked her where she felt that perspective of *presence* came from. She replied, "I see you stems from wanting a student to feel noticed." She said that for her, as a teacher, it was very important that her students feel seen and not judged.

Putting Deleuze's (1987) theory of desire to work here, it becomes possible that more is provoked and produced in her desire for wanting a student to feel seen as a by-product of her *being* present. It becomes thinkable when considering how desire is a force that produces other intensities and flows of the phenomenon that Hope's capacity to slow down the speed of time to really see a child in the way that she values may also produce in Hope a nonjudgmental perspective of *the moment* and *herself*. Perhaps in her desire to silently communicate "I see you" without judgment to the child can also be read as her seeing the moment and herself nonjudgmentally. Perhaps in this way, Hope's engagement of her desire to *be* present for students in a way that they feel seen provokes a way of *being with* and *in* the fast moments in teaching that diffuses, if only for a short time, a chronic feeling of time stress and not-enough-ness. It becomes thinkable that Hope's core value and desire for her students to feel seen and not judged is also embodied in her *being*-ness toward herself and the moment when she *becomes* consciously present amidst fast-paced teacher time.

Engaging the Present Moment through the Breath. "All of us have the capacity to be mindful. All it involves is cultivating our ability to pay attention in the present moment" (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p. 11). As teachers discover their capacity to drop out of the busy

mind that can be whipped into a frenzy given the perceived time stress of all there is to "do" in teaching and drop into the present moment, they drop into themselves and the moments with their students in ways that appear to be more in alignment with who they desire to *be* and *become* as a teacher.

Through her lived experience description (LED) of a time when she felt her presence made a difference in her teaching, Ryan describes how her breath became the core element that enabled her to connect to the present moment in a way that allowed her *be* present in the fast-paced moments of teaching that provoked the possibility for her to teach from a calm, open, and nonjudgmental state of *being-ness*:

> During reading we started to read a new story. This story happened to have several characters from nursery rhymes. My students started to shout different characters out. As a teacher, I started to feel frustrated that my students were getting so loud and talking when I wanted to get started. At that moment, I took a breath and realized they weren't talking to be disrespectful. They in fact were talking because they were excited to make connections. I stood silently and within a minute, my students were ready to begin the story.

In this lived experience description how *being present* made a difference in her teaching, Ryan does several noteworthy things that may contribute to her cultivation of a *teacher Presence*. First, notice how she describes feeling aware of her interior experience of feeling frustrated, because she was desiring to get to the story and start the lesson but her students were talking. She senses and feels this inner tension between wanting to get the lesson going and the reality that her students did not appear ready or wanting to engage the story just yet.

When we get caught in a busy mind that desires nothing more than to keep going and push forward, we can quickly miss moments, especially those teachable moments, where authentic connection and engagement can be enacted and embodied within our teaching. In this increased moment of self-awareness, I contend, that Ryan's mindfulness training is influencing how she engages and thus, experiences, that moment; she takes a breath, *becomes* present, and shifts her perspective. This suspended moment of one breath can be read as a profound moment of creating the *slow in the fast* moment in teaching. It is profound because in this moment of slowing down and connecting to herself and the reality of what she is experiencing, she has major shift in perspective. "I

took a breath and realized they weren't talking to be disrespectful. They were in fact talking because they were excited to make connections," she said. This shift in perspective can change everything about how the rest of that moment and the lesson proceeded. Through her breath, Ryan re-positions her perspective in a way that can be read as potentially diffusing a stress reaction in herself in the moment, because it appears that when she transcends the thought that students are being disrespectful, she enables herself to consider another thought/ perspective that is more compassionate; that her students are making really good connections and that this is a rich teachable moment to engage with them.

Ryan discovers how *being* present in the moment may actually save her time (and her sanity) in the long run. Smalley and Winston (2010) talk about how often mindfulness is perceived at one more thing to do or something time stressed people do not have time for. "After all, even if there were some benefits to the practice, who has the time? Right away we can dispel the notion that mindfulness is time consuming. In fact, it is time-*enhancing* and can be practiced anywhere, in the blink of an eye" (p. 11). Ryan discovers this in her retelling of a moment she felt she taught from a calm, clear mind. In our interview, she went on to explain how she felt her peers may perceive mindfulness as time consuming. Ryan was reflecting on what she witnessed in her school after I presented an all-day session on mindfulness and teacher stress to the entire staff during the Fall back-to-school professional development week. She said:

> As a teacher, if you don't buy into this practice, you will think it is a lot of work. You think, 'This is crazy. I am going to waste all my time trying to talk to my students and this and that.' But once you do….Wow. You realize that in those investments in time you are not really losing time at all. I realized I am gaining it in the long run.

In thinking with theory about this phenomenological material using Deleuze (1987) and his theory of desire, it is important to ask, *what does desire produce?* For Deleuze (1987), "desire is about production. We desire, not because we lack something that we do not have (as Lacan would insist), but because of the forces and actions that are actively becoming " (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 87). Ryan's *desire* to be present, patient, and calm as a teacher is produced in moments when she feels most triggered and tugged to move fast. This desire to *be* present may, in fact, produce the opportunities in

which Ryan can self-actualize and *become* the kind of teacher she desires to *be* within the moments of fast-paced teacher time.

For example, after Ryan took an intentional breath, she made a remarkable shift in perspective about student behavior. When I work with teachers around exploring their emotional triggers in the classroom setting, a majority of the time the trigger can be distilled down to one primary line of thinking: *I am not getting what I want from my students thus I unconsciously interpret student behavior as disrespectful to my needs and desires in that moment.* In the moment that Ryan describes in her LED writing, she appears to illuminate her awareness of this unconscious storyline the moment she feels the inner agitation to move forward when her students are talking. What is important to notice here is that Ryan appears to goes beyond and transcend that thought. In *being* present and feeling the agitation of wanting to go faster, she feels the tension in her body and can connect it to the trigger thought that she is being disrespected. In this moment of awareness, coupled with her breath and her desire to be calm and centered as a teacher and her capacity to transcend her thought of being disrespected, it may be read that she *becomes* who she desires to be in this moment—a teacher who is patient, kind, and respectful towards her students.

In thinking with theory and Deleuze's (1987) desire as a productive force or "machine" that is "autonomous, self-constituting and creative, which functions as an ontology of change, transformation, or 'becoming'" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 89), it may be read that in this moment of desiring to be present, Ryan *becomes* herself as a teacher. It may be read that in this moment of creating the *slow in the fast*, she engages in what Deleuze (1987) calls "deterritorialization."

> Deterritorialization is the process of un-coding habitual relations, experiences, and usages of language in order to separate the foundational human image-opinion construct that orients thought in a specific manner. A re-composition or reterritorialization is the production of a higher quality of deterritorialization, which is the power of taking a quality beyond its actual occurrence and granting it a general extension, the power to actualize, to become differently. (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 89)

I read Ryan's desire to *be* present as producing not only her state of *being*-ness in that moment but also producing who she is *becoming.* It may be read that when she slows down the fast-paced speed of teacher time that may be exacerbating a busy and distracted

mind, she creates a *slow in the fast* moment where she can transcend the her habitual re-actions and "un-code habitual relations" so to go beyond the fast-paced moment to "become differently" and more in alignment with who *she* desires to be.

To slow down her reaction in that pivotal moment in her *becoming,* Ryan takes a breath. She describes how intimately related her initial reaction to the unexpected quantity of talking the students were doing to her instinct to take a conscious breath to center herself amidst her reaction. In Kabat-Zinn's (1990) seminal book *Full Catastrophe Living* he writes about the power of a conscious breath. While the breath is intimately connected with the physical matter of the body, keeping all the regulating systems in fine working order (e.g., heart, lungs, circulatory systems, etc.), it is also an intimate tether to the part of the self that is not affected by the agitations in the mind.

> Our breathing also has the virtue of being a very convenient process to support ongoing awareness in our daily lives. As long as we are alive, it is always with us…Tuning to [the breath] anywhere we feel it in the body allows us to drop below the surface of agitations of the mind and into relaxation, calmness, and stability…When you touch base in any moment with that part of your mind that is calm and stable, your perspective immediately changes. You can see things more clearly and act from inner balance rather than being tossed about by the agitations of your mind. (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, pp. 49, 52, 53)

For Ryan, taking a conscious breath appears to have produced a profound way of *being* with herself, the moment, and her students; a way of *being* that allowed her teach from a place of inner balance and alignment with her core desires for how she wants to *be* as a teacher. She shared with me during her interview that she desire to be "balanced" as a teacher, and this lived experience description provides evidence of how she did just that— she sensed in the present moment that she was getting agitated, took a breath, balanced her internal world, regained control by seeing the moment from a different vantage point which then produced an opportunity for her to both *be* and *become* the teacher she desires to be. I theorize this intra-action (Barad, 2007) between her internal and external awareness through the power of breath, which connects her to the "now" and her spirit, as a reciprocal process of *being* and *becoming* that give rise to the production of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*.

Rebecca, a veteran teacher with over 25 years of experience describes how her breath produces a pivotal point of transformation of her *being*-ness in the present moment as she describes a time she felt her *teacher Presence* made a difference in her teaching. In her lived experience description of a time she taught from a calm mind, she recounts how she uses breath work to self-center after experiencing several consecutive days of indoor recess. Rebecca describes how she felt "frazzled" because of the endless noise, interruptions, and a feeling of being unable to get her work done. Rebecca explained her end-of-recess routine where the class uses a Hoberman Sphere[9] as a calming breathing exercise. For this practice, either the teacher or the student holds the sphere and expands and contracts it as the class breathes in unison to the expansion and contraction. She describes how she always breathes with the kids during this window of time, and how she believes that this intentional breath work brings her back to her inner calm and sense of control. "During this time, I close my eyes and focus on the breaths instead of the child with the ball or other the kids. I am able to calm myself for a moment— I do feel an ability/ power to be aware."

Ryan and Rebecca describe how powerful breathing and a teacher's *being*-ness in the present moment intra-act (Barad, 2007) to produce a line of *becoming* that is in alignment with one's values and aspirations. One may even infer that their intentional and conscious breaths produced a powerful state of teacher *being*-ness called "withitness." In *Mindfulness for Teachers: Simple skills for peace and productivity in the classroom*, Patricia Jennings (2015) describes this powerful state of teacher *being*-ness:

> Withitness requires self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and relationship management, giving teachers the capacity to attentively monitor and act responsively in the classroom, prevent disruptive behavior, and support on-task behavior… teachers who remain cool under pressure, addressing disciplinary issues matter-of-factly without taking behaviors personally, are the most effective classroom managers. (pp. 42-43)

I suggest that for Rebecca, her awareness of mindfulness strategies to employ in those predictable moments of the teaching day that tend to be more chaotic than others produced an opportunity for her to *become* the teacher she desires to *be*. In an interview

[9] A Hoberman Sphere is an expandable (and contractible) ball that is often used to guide a breathing exercise.

about using breath work to increase self-awareness, she described alignment with herself as a teacher as *being* aware, and she described how she felt that increased self-awareness allowed her to be more aware of the needs of her students. "I am able to be more aware of my needs to slow down and to be able to give my students what they deserve emotionally," she said. *Being* emotionally present for her students appears to be a value and desire for Rebecca as a teacher. It may be read that her desire to give her students what they deserve emotionally provokes her willingness engage mindfulness practices to *be* and *become* aware of her inner state of *being*-ness in response to the external experiences she encounters in a hectic classroom. Given this phenomenological material, it becomes thinkable that this intra-action (Barad, 2007) of *being*-ness in the present moment and her *becoming* the teacher she desires to be through her calm presence is the point of production for the cultivation of the phenomenon of her *teacher Presence.* It may be read that in moments that at first appear to be dis-orienting or emotionally provocative (i.e., stress producing), through connecting with her breath, Rebecca empowers herself to both *be* and *become* the emotionally attentive and available teacher she desires to be.

Settling into moments of *Being*

> Learning how to stop all of your doing and shift over to a 'being' mode, learning how to make time for yourself, how to slow down and nurture calmness and self-acceptance in yourself, learning to observe what your own mind is up to from moment to moment, how to watch your thoughts and how to let go of them without getting so caught up and driven by them, how to make room for new ways of seeing old problems and for perceiving the interconnectedness of things, these are some of the lessons of mindfulness. This kind of learning involves settling into moments of being and cultivating awareness. (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p. 20)

Being present (i.e., fully engaged with the present moment as it is) may provoke the contingent and recursive process of *being* and *becoming* that not only cultivates *teacher Presence*, but also creates the space for the expression and actualization of *teacher Presence* through the present moment.

I make the move away from teacher lived experiences and lived experience descriptions to explore a line of flight of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* by seeing what becomes thinkable about the phenomenon through theorizing this provocation of a teacher's *being* present in fast paced teaching time through the lens of Celtic Spirituality.

Thinking through Celtic Spirituality

I have chosen to craft phenomenological research where I willingly "chase intentionalities and their various possibilities as they take complicated shape in multiple, sometimes competing contexts" (Vagle, 2014, p. 41). The Deleuzo-Guattrian concepts of lines of flight and assemblages "privileges how things connect rather than what things are" (Lorraine, 2005 as cited in Vagle, p. 118, 2014). Working from the idea that post-intentional phenomena are socially-produced and shaped in and over time, I operate from the vantage point that the phenomenon, *teacher Presence*, is like an assemblage that produces multiple intentionalities that are "constituted and become plural lines of flight" that flee, entangle, and take on various intensities in and over time (Vagle, Clements, & Coffee, 2017, p. 9). Thus, I am curious: How might *teacher Presence* manifest in its perpetually partial, fleeting, and unstable manner in relationship to Celtic Spirituality?

The Celtic mind is a reverential mind that relates to life with a deep respect for the mystery, the unseen, and the invisible; they have a deep admiration for the connectedness of the ineffable, invisible world to the visible world. "The Celtic mind was not burdened by dualism. It did not separate what belongs together. The dualism that separates the visible from the invisible, time from eternity, the human from the divine, was totally alien to them" (O'Donohue, 1999, p. xvii). Imbued in Celtic Spirituality is a capacity to see not just what is apparent to the human eye while one is incarnate in human form, but a capacity to sense the invisible worlds of the human, those "regions of the soul that inhabit the eternal" (O'Donohue, 1999, p. 177). For the Celts, the human being is connected to the divine at all times. The Celts also have a deep sense of the ways eternal time (that sense of when time stands still) is woven throughout human time (that sense that time is quickly slipping through one's hands). In Celtic Spirituality, "[e]ternal time is unbroken presence" (O'Donohue, 1999, p. 176). It is assumed that everything is intimately interconnected and intertwined all the time.

Given this assumed inter-connectedness, Celtic Spirituality and the Celtic imagination honor the circle because it is the most universal and ancient shape in the universe. "It recognized how the rhythm of experience, nature, and divinity followed a circular pattern" (O'Donohue, 1999, p. xix). Celtic Spirituality reminds us how we come out of the darkness of the unknown and invisible world to live here in the visible world

for a brief time only to return again at death back into the invisible world. *Teacher Presence* takes shape through Celtic Spirituality as an infinite, circular inter-action of *being*-in-the-world (i.e., visible "being present in the present moment") and *becoming* one's self (i.e., engaging with one's inner divine *Presence,* soul, or true self through present moment awareness). As one engages present moment awareness (*being* present in the moment), one expands their capacity to *become* the teacher they desire to be and embody their authentic *teacher Presence*. *Teacher Presence* bursts forth through the philosophic lens of Celtic Spirituality as a phenomenon that is perpetually *becoming* in and through the present moment and the human's consciousness awareness of and attunement to the present moment.

Theorizing through Celtic Spirituality, *teacher Presence* becomes the representation of the perpetual circulation of the soul/spirit growth and expression of the human self as a result of one's engagement in the present moment through physical form. *Teacher Presence becomes* the infinite circular process of the manifestation of soul growth/ actualization (i.e, the invisible soul *becoming* itself—the invisible felt-ness of one's *Presence*) into visible physical form (i.e., *being* present physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually) with/in/through a teachers inter-actions with her students. In this infinite circular dance and inter-action between the spirits of the teacher and the student, if both show up to that space present, authentic, and real, opportunities are produced for a co-transformation through the coalescence of their spirits.

Often times it is the teacher who directly influences *in/with/through* her own *being-in-the-moment-ness* the milieu where students feel comfortable *being* in that space in an authentic and open way. "We describe how in the threshold, we meet in that in-between space, a space of shared deterritorialization in which we constitute one another" (Mazzei & Jackson, 2012, p. 449). Teachers engaging the present moment with conscious awareness and present moment *being*-ness may enter into a sacred threshold, a space where teacher and student meet through authentic *being*-ness, that opens each other up to engaging the infinite possibility of who they desire to *become*. I contend that when a teacher engages her own vulnerability, shows up authentically in the present moment, open to *being* in new ways that break free of old patterns of "re-acting" to student behavior, she may not only actualize *teacher Presence,* but her *teacher Presence* may

create space for students to actualize their own personal *Presence.* Thinking through Celtic Spirituality, the teacher and the student become intimately and invisibly entangled in a circular process of *being* and *becoming* through their experiences of the present moment.

Provocation #1: Being present in the fast-paced moments in teaching can allow for a teacher to slow down the speed of time to….
Provocation #2: …Integrate intentions, awareness, and attitude in the slow moment in fast paced teaching to teach from a calm, open, and nonjudgmental mind…

Being present is a powerful state of *being*-ness for a teacher, and as the teachers in this study articulate, it can be claimed in an instant even amidst the rushed time of teaching. Being aware of one's conscious awareness is not actually about the moment but rather all about on the quality of one's *being-ness* in that moment. *Being* present is a powerful quality of attention. When one practices mindfulness, one cultivates a refined quality of attention that gives rise to *being present* in a way that welcomes and meets the experiences of life, another, and one's self nonjudgmentally. This quality of attention of *being present* in this way is derivative of the intentional act of practicing the core qualities of mindful awareness: intention, attention, and attitude (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).

Teachers in this study who wrote about moments of teaching from a calm, quiet mind in the fast-paced moments of teaching often cited an intentional mindfulness practice of creating a deliberate gap in the fast-paced time of their daily lives to cultivate the benefits of intentional "non-doing" mentality prior to stepping into the classroom. Ruth is a music teacher with over 25 years of teaching experience who credits much of her capacity to self-regulate and calm her mind and body during the fast paced moments of teaching from the mindfulness practices she learned from the *Present Teacher* Training program. For Ruth, mindfulness-based strategies like stopping to catch her breath, using the glitter jar[10], listening to daily meditations on her Calm App., thinking

[10] A "glitter jar" or Calm Down Jar is a bottle filled with colored water, glitter, and glitter glue. When shaken up, the glitter swirls around representing a clouded mind. When you put the jar down, the glitter slowly falls to the bottom representing how to bring attention back to the now. When the glitter settles, the water becomes clear- representing a calm, clear, settled mind.

thoughts of METTA[11]/"Loving Kindness," and setting daily intentions for how she wants to *be* that day with students are all practices she credits to helping her reclaim her calm when she starts to feel stressed. Ruth also captured in her lived experience description (LED) of teaching from a calm and open mindset how her practice of being *intentional* (in this case for her, actually setting a daily intention), being *aware* of when she needs to catch her breath to stay engaged in the present moment, and keeping a positive *attitude* allowed her *be* and *become* present in her teaching practice. Her LED of a time she taught from a clear, calm mind begins by her describing a moment with a student who displays severe "attention getting behaviors" that routinely trigger her reactions:

> I had set my intention for the day to be cheerful. This student comes to my first class of the day. It was a typical class—lots of bizarre attention seeking behaviors, but I tried to view them through the light and cheerful lens. I just smiled and redirected.

Setting intentions, like Ruth displays in her description, is a mindfulness practice that not only invites a teacher to ground her attention and energy in what she desires to happen, it also has profound neurological benefits and neuro-scientific grounding. In *Buddha's Brain: The practical neuroscience of happiness, love, and wisdom*, Dr. Rick Hanson (2009) illustrates how the brain gets motivated through producing important neural networks and connections as a result of setting intentions and pursing them. Hanson (2009) articulates how four distinct regions of the brain work in tandem along a "neuroaxis" to support one's intention setting:

> When an intention crystalizes, your inner experience of things coming together toward a unified aim reflects a *neural coherence*... When you get motivated in any significant way, it means the subcortical regions that connect to the amygdala (part of the brain that deciphers what is important to you) have synchronized with each other. (pp. 100-101)

Hanson (2009) explains how the integration of the four regions of the brain along the neuroaxis can happen within a fraction of a second in response to "motivationally meaningful information" (p. 102). Neurologically speaking, setting intentions and being intentional with recognizing and acting upon one's desires have a neurological basis for cultivating inclinations like generosity, compassion, kindness, and insight as they "ripple

[11] METTA is a guided compassion meditation that promotes connection to the self, to another, and to the world through feeling while thinking thoughts of loving kindness.

up and down the neuroaxis, from visceral brain stem energy for good causes to abstract ideals sustained by the PFC" (prefrontal cortex region of the brain associated with self-regulation) (p. 103). In effect, the four levels of the brain work together to keep you motived and in strong pursuit of your desires (i.e., intentions). It appears that with awareness and setting intentions based on one's desires and core values produces powerful action as the head and the heart integrate together:

> These two networks—metaphorically the head and the heart—can support each other, be awkwardly out of sync, or struggle in outright conflict. Ideally, your intentions will be aligned with each other at all levels of the neuroaxis: that's when they have the most power. (Hanson, 2009, p. 108)

I contend that Ruth's intention setting produced the integration of her head and heart as she demonstrated self-regulatory behavior of her inner experience of her own emotional reaction so to show up and express her heartfelt intention to be cheerful and maintain an attitude of joy and positivity throughout whatever came her way that day. In the moment Ruth described in her lived experience description, she explained how she had to ask the child to leave the classroom due to his behavior, but that she did so with a completely different state of *being*-ness. Instead of getting triggered, Ruth describes asking the child to leave in a calm and centered way that did not convey any emotional anger or agitation. Later, during her lunch, the student appeared at her door in a "very calm and in a normal emotional/ behavioral state," Ruth wrote. She went on to explain how she and this student connected about his behavior in a restorative way where she explained to him in a calm manner that she "was trying to stay patient, but things got too big" for her. Her student responded by mentioning how impressed he was that she stayed that patient that long with him. Their conversation ended with his accepting her invitation to use the glitter jar she keeps in class as his calming down tool. Ruth concludes her LED with an interesting insight:

> Did this troubled student sense that today I was intending to be light and cheerful? We were communicating on a much better level because of my intention to be light and cheerful. I felt so positive, I felt like my true self, and the space felt redeemed.

Hanson (2009) describes how setting intentions is grounded in the pre-frontal cortex of the brain—the part of the brain that manages self-regulation of moods,

behavior, and perspectives. Dr. Siegel (2011) says, "[w]hen we are not taken over by our thoughts and feelings, we can become more clear in our internal world as well as more receptive to the inner world of another." Based on the phenomenological material, I suggest Ruth experienced this in her teaching; as she set her intention, her desire of how she wanted to *be* in her teaching that day, she appeared to no only experience inner lightness and clarity but also patiently observed the inner world of her student in a way that produced a connection between herself (e.g., "I felt like my true self.") and the student (e.g., "The space felt redeemed.").

Kukumon, a teacher for Somali students in a mid-western urban school, also credits her mindfulness practice of setting intentions, engaging with awareness, and maintaining a positive attitude in helping her to stay present and non-reactive in her teaching.

> I spend a lot of time each morning preparing for going to work to help myself mentally prepare for the challenges of teaching my students. I get up and listen to my meditation app, Calm.com. I think through my day. I also listen to inspirational music and by the time I leave my home, I am a pillar of serenity.

Kukumon describes how maintaining this "pillar of serenity" is perpetual and deliberate work yet that it reaps important dividends in the classroom setting:

> I really do make a lot of an effort to have it all together, but… it's not too long into my day before that pillar begins to collapse. Usually by 10:30 a.m., I am starting to see cracks in it, and by 3:00 p.m., I am looking at the clock and trying to seek out a quiet room to reset my calm. Each day I have to go through this extensive routine to build the stamina to survive this stressful environment.

Kukumon illustrates how she attunes to this inner force, this desire that she has the capacity to tap into throughout her day to keep re-centering her self in the present moment, in herself, and in her body so she can show up and *be* present as a "pillar of serenity." In mindfulness spaces this pillar of serenity is often called "equanimity."

In *Buddha's Brain*, Dr. Rick Hanson (2009) quotes Nyanaponika Thera who says, "Equanimity is a perfect, unshakable balance of mind" (p. 109). He goes on to explain the Latin roots of the word meaning "even" and "mind."

> With equanimity, what passes through your mind is held with spaciousness so you stay even-keeled and aren't thrown off balance. The

> ancient circuitry of the brain is continually driving you to react one way or another—and equanimity is your circuit breaker. (Hanson, 2009, p. 109)

For Kukumon, I contend that her mindful self-maintenance practice has the dual effect of providing her with concrete strategies that work for her to survive the stress of teaching (i.e., preserving her personhood) while also teaching (i.e., projecting her professionalism) from a calm, quiet open mind in the present moment that keeps her "even-keeled" and not easily thrown off balance in the fast-paced lived time that is teaching. For Aeo, a first year teacher, he says:

> When I am teaching from a quiet, open mind, despite whatever is going on around me, things get better. I come out on the other side of the lesson with a clear purpose of what I did. I am not just responding or reacting to my environment. I have a sense of control over myself even when the situation is actually out of my control. I think that the students respond positively to that. It models to them that they do not have to just respond to their environment. This is important because we are dealing with students who have experienced trauma in their families. It does not take much with them for a situation to escalate out of control. I am learning how to manage it when it does. Teaching from a quiet, open mind is a tremendously helpful tool to use in these types of situations.

Aeo, who was in a long-term substitute teaching position at the time of our interview, shared with me how he consciously leverages his knowledge of setting intentions, engaging conscious awareness, and maintaining a positive attitude to help him manage the stress he experiences in the classroom setting. Teachers who attend *Present Teacher*™ Training who have assumed substitute teaching positions at some point in their career often comment about the unique stressors of that role. Jumping into new classrooms with different norms and routines, gaining student trust in a short amount of time, and the stress of not knowing what building or grade level you will be teaching in each day are often cited as the biggest stressors. Aeo shared with me the ways his mindfulness practice of setting intentions, paying attention, and maintaining an open attitude pays off being a substitute teacher:

> In general it had helped me come into the classroom with a more open mind, not slowed down by any negative thoughts that I may have heard from other teachers in the school. In general you tend to hear a lot of things in the inner city. You are set up to be scared before you even start.

> So I do my best not to hold onto those ideas from other people and go experience it for myself.

Aeo shared with me how even paying attention to the substitute notes about the highlighted students who tend to have a more difficult time self-regulating affords him an opportunity to be both aware of and intentional with his attitude and actions towards these students:

> It seems in taking no more than a minute or two at the beginning of the day to talk to them and see how they are doing and introduce your self and ask basic questions and show interest, the rest of the day goes better for those students. In general, I've had good luck with it; it seems so simple, right at the beginning of the day it seems to help.

I asked Aeo how he felt this intentional investment in slowing down the fast-paced teacher time to direct in his time, energy, and attention to these specific children positively impacted his interactions with them throughout the day. He said he noticed that when he made an intentional effort to connect with these students, they put in more effort in the work the rest of the day.

> With all the students, you want to try to make sure to talk to them within 30 seconds of being in the classroom. I make sure I use their name and use their name correctly…. It is important to say their name correctly when you take the time to say their name correctly, they seem to appreciate it. Asking them how they are feeling this morning. Then I just leave it at the end with 'if there is anything you need today, be sure to let me know, I am here to help.' And then I let them have their space. I think that is important to give them that space to eat their breakfast and do their morning work. Just connect with them to let them know you are there.

As our interview progressed, Aeo told me that he credits his daily mindfulness practice of listening to guided audio meditations (body scans, in particular) and "most days a little bit of yoga" as positively impacting his capacity to maintain a calm and centered *being*-ness in his teaching:

> I used to be much more reactive. Today and now, it doesn't always play out this way. I try to leave a little bit of space between any behavior that may happen from a student and give them the respect to express of allowing them to express themselves they way they need to and then giving it a moment to diffuse and then attack it after that; after it is calmed down. It seems like if I'm just there and acknowledge how they feel it diffuses itself without me even doing anything— without reacting is the

> key. My reaction pulls out another reaction, and we get caught in a crazy cycle that no one likes.

Aeo seems to desire or has a deliberate intention to *be* fully present for his students; especially students who are marked in the substitute notes as those who need additional attention. He deliberately slows down the fast-paced teacher time to connect with students so to express this desire with them. His awareness and attitude in the future moments of that day may very well be transformed because he has established this connection and has the capacity to be less reactive to stress-inducing student behaviors.

It appears that Aeo is integrating his intentions and present moment awareness in a manner that produces opportunities for connection and engagement with students that allows him to remain present in the moment and embody equanimity.

> Equanimity is neither apathy nor indifference: you are warmly engaged with the world but not troubled by it. Through its nonreactivity, it creates a great space for compassion, loving kindness, and joy at the good fortune of others. (Hanson, 2009, p. 110)

Siegel (2011) describes "integration" as "a process by which separate elements are linked together into a working whole" (p. xiii). It may become possible that the cultivation of *teacher Presence* is produced as a by-product of the integration of a teacher's intentions, quality of awareness, and positive attitude in the *slow in the fast* gaps of time in teaching. It appears that an integration of internal *being*-ness, like *being* calm or *being* a "pillar of serenity" produces a space in the moment for a teacher to connect with external realities of teaching in a way that forges a connection that enhances her internal sense of well-being and connectedness to self.

- *Provocation #1: …Being present in fast-paced moments in teaching can allow for a teacher to slow down the speed of time to….*
- *Provocation #2: ...Integrate intentions, awareness, and attitudes to teach from a calm, open, and nonjudgmental mind that may provoke the possibility to…*
- ***Provocation #3: …Create the Micro-Miracle Moment.***

Teachers are creators. They create curriculum, lesson plans, relationships, and connections among students, just to name a few. Teachers are always creating. As the

phenomenological material in this study suggests, they can also slow down the fast-paced speed of teaching time to create *slow in the fast* moments that invite them into deeper connections with themselves and their students. It is so suggested through the data in this study that as teachers engage setting intentions, using the breath to engage conscious awareness, and maintaining a equanimous attitude that they are able to create "teachable moments" where the *feel* like effective teachers. Darlene Stewart (1993) claims in her book *Creating the Teachable Moment* that after fifteen years of teaching, she has discovered the secret to "high-powered, low-stress, success-oriented teaching and learning" (p. viiii). The secret: *the state of the mind*.

> Intelligence, clear thinking, insight and inspiring feelings of all kinds are natural by-products of the mind operating at peak condition, in positive states or good moods… Not all moments are teachable. In negative moods people lose their edge, their thoughts are cloudy, their attention is distracted and their feelings are disturbing…. The key to turning unteachable moments into teachable ones, the key to tapping your deepest intelligence, common sense, talents and abilities, the key to helping other people tap theirs, is *learning to live in positive, composed states of mind.* (pp. viiii, xi)

A production of the phenomenological material in this study is the term "Micro-miracle moment." Micro-miracle moments are theorized in this dissertation as restorative and connective teachable moments that educators have the innate power and control to create. What is required for the creation of the micro-miracle moment is present moment awareness, self-awareness, and non-judgmental noticing. As a teacher engages these dispositions and her inherent ability to drop out of the "doing" and intentionally engage in the present moment, she creates the opportunity within the micro-miracle moment to integrate her intentions, awareness, and attitude in a way that allow her to both *be* and set the course to *become* the teacher she desires.

The term "micro-miracle moment" was produced after reading Hope's lived experience description of a moment she trusted her intuition and allowed it to guide her actions during what she termed a "micro-moment" of teaching when she felt effective as a teacher. After I read Hope's description of this "micro-moment" where it appeared she shifted the energy of her state of *being*-ness (e.g., shifting out of the *doing* mentality of quickly completing her assessments into *being* present in the moment for her crying

student) and in doing so created an opportunity to engage with her student in such a way that the student's state of *being*-ness shifted (e.g., from being sad and upset to feeling capable and accomplished) that I immediately thought of Marianne Williamson's (1992) definition of a miracle.

I am using the work of Marianne Williamson (1992) in her book, *A Return to Love,* to conceptualize how through increased self-awareness and conscious present moment awareness teachers have the capacity to create "miracles" or shifts in perception. Williamson (1992) refers to miracles not solely as changes in our external, material conditions, but more so as a change in our psychological or emotional inner conditions. A miracle, she says, "is a shift not so much in an objective situation—although that often occurs—as it is a shift in how we *perceive* the situation. What changes, primarily, is how we hold an experience in our minds—how we experience the experience" (Williamson, 1992, p. 65).

Hope and Ryan both display through their lived experience descriptions their capacity to transfigure energy; to shift out of a mode of busyness into a mode of *being* fully present in the moment. In maybe read that in moments of transfiguring one's state of *being*, a teacher creates the opportunity for a shift in perception. For Hope, instead of focusing all her energy on getting through her assessments, she *became* present in a way that allowed her to "see" her student; which we know is of value to her as a teacher. It appears that Hope's undivided attention in this moment with this student, created a micro-miracle moment where both her energy and the energy of the student shifted in a positive and productive way. Hope recalls how, in that moment, she felt like a good teacher—"helping a child go from sad and crying, to feeling proud is the best thing. It made me feel like a good teacher."

So much of how we experience the world, another, and most importantly, our selves, depends on our perceptions. Williamson (1992) articulates how profound a shift in perspective is—thus calling it a miracle. Any moment where one consciously shifts their perspective *from* fear *to* love is a miracle. In this paper, I refer to "micro-miracle moments" to capture this perspective shifting that leads to a different way of *being* and *becoming* as a teacher. Micro-miracle moments are those moments where a teacher shifts the energy of the space, both her inner space and the external space between herself and

her students, from fear (or variations of fear like control, domination, anxiety, etc.) to love (or variations of love like openness, compassion, and acceptance). In this way, when a teacher creates moments where fear-based perceptions are transfigured into energy of love, compassion, and kindness *through* present moment awareness, she engages her *being*-ness and *becoming* in a way that is in alignment with her authentic self that is grounded in her core identity (values and purposes) and connected to her desired imagination of who she wants to *become*. Micro-miracle moments in teaching can be profound moments of self-love, self-care, and spiritual well-*being*. It appears through thes phenomenological material in this study that teachers who engage present moment awareness in the fast-paced teacher time have the power and potential to create *slow in the fast* moments where they can reclaim an intimate and positive connection with themselves, their students, and the moment. This process is healing and restores mental and emotional health and balance.

Researcher Post-Reflexion of a Micro-Miracle Moment

As the researcher in post-intentional phenomenological research, my personal experiences with the phenomenon become phenomenological material to be explored. This particular reflection of the way the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* was made manifest in my own teaching was captured immediately after I experienced a "mirco-miracle moment" where I felt that my calm state of *being*-ness created a moment of healing and connection between myself and a teacher as well as created the space for the cultivation of my own *teacher Presence*.

In Buddhist philosophy, is it often said that there are two ways we inflict suffering upon ourselves; clinging to what we want or avoiding what we do not want. As a mindfulness educator for teachers, my personal self-awareness practice helps me to see when I find myself clinging to how I want my "lessons" to unfold, how I desire the mindfulness activities to feel or look, or how much I want to be sure to "cover" in my teaching. I have discovered that when I fall into a mental trap of over-doing, over-analyzing, over-planning, or over-teaching how much it impacts my capacity to not only *be* present but how much this mental clinging blocks the expression of my *teacher Presence.*

Increased self-awareness of when I do not feel present in myself or in the moments of my teaching produces profound personal insight. In the moment of recognition of not *being* present, I *become* present and open the internal mental, emotional, and heart space to actualize my *teacher Presence. Becoming* present in the moments of my teaching can happen in an instant. I consciously catch my breath; immediately syncing up with the reality of what is unfolding both inside and outside of myself. Thus, I have discovered how important lack of present moment awareness to be in the production and cultivation of *teacher Presence*. *Not* being present gives me something to push against; something to practice coming back to. *Not* being present creates the condition for my capacity *to be* present and an opportunity for my *teacher Presence* to be cultivated and made manifest.

In my experiences with the phenomenon, I have discovered that when I embody my *teacher Presence*, it becomes contagious. When I am teaching from a place of *being present*—fully attuned to what is happening in the moment for myself and my students (in this case, teachers) without the distraction of the busy and judgmental mind making mental projections of how things "should" be, I feel as if my students can feel my *teacher Presence*. It is as if my full, embodied engagement with them and myself in the moment provides an invisible energy for us to connect with and through. I often feel that when I am fully present, and fully embodying who I know myself to *be* and who I desire to *become* in the moments of my teaching with my students (e.g., compassionate, kind, respectful, caring), that this integrated *being-becoming*-ness creates an invisible energy of trust that invites my students to share their authentic *being*-ness in that space.

Conversely, I have discovered that when I attempt to control and teach from a detached, "professional," perfect, and polished place, my *teacher Presence* feels distorted and diminished. It feels as if there is no "me" present in that moment for my students to connect with; perhaps because I am disconnected from myself. In moments of self-detachment that tend to occur when I feel stressed or fearful that I'm not doing enough, or afraid to share the truth of who I am through the experiences I have lived as a teacher, teaching feels clunky, heavy, and heartless. In these moments of disconnection from the present moment, it is as if my *teacher Presence* flees the embodiment of my teaching, and teaching feels monotonous and bland. And I have also discovered that when my

teaching lacks a sense of *me*, the in-between space between myself and my students feels cold and disconnected. I am not alone in my propensity to disconnect from myself in my teaching. Parker Palmer (1997) refers to this disconnection as the "self-protective split of personhood" of the teacher. To reduce our vulnerabilities as teachers who engage a profession that is always "done at the dangerous intersection of personal and public life," (Palmer, 1997, p. 18), we self-protect by distancing ourselves from our students, our subjects, and even ourselves. "We build a wall between inner truth and outer performance, and we play-act the teacher's part. Our words, spoken at remove from our hearts become 'the balloon speech cartoons,' and we become caricatures of ourselves" (Palmer, 1997, p. 19).

I have personally experienced the ways that consciously staying connected with myself and the present moment through mindfulness training has cultivated a deeper capacity to connect with my breath in the moments of my teaching when I know I need to call on the deepest parts of my *being*-ness— my truth, my vulnerability as a human, and my honest expression of who I really am. These moments tend to be when I am teaching something new, opening up the space for courageous conversations, or inviting teachers to share out personal experiences. For these moments are fraught with uncertainty and vulnerability. "When mindful, you connect with others at a deeper level, not at the level of on ego interacting with the other. Your relationships are thus secure, bonded with understanding and love" (Soot, 2009, p. 111). In my experience, it feels as if the cultivation of *teacher Presence becomes* and is produced in and through authentic emotional relationships with students in moments that require me to bring my full self even if I am uncertain, and a little afraid, of what I may experience.

One moment such as this happened during the last of a series of *Present Teacher™ Training* sessions. It was a Saturday morning, and twelve teachers were sitting silently in a circle on cushions in a meditation room on the college campus where the course took place. It was near the end of our three hours together, and I was leading them through a fifteen-minute guided meditation. During these guided meditations, I invite teachers into their inner experiences at the onset of the meditation to feel their physical body and breath As is typical in a guided meditation, I create space for teachers to practice attending to their inner world while also providing grounding through guided prompts to

notice their breath, the moment, their emotions, or physical sensations. Given that this was the last session of our training, it was my intention to create longer spaces of silence where I reframed from guiding them, because I felt confident that with their training they could practice observing their mind and their attention without a lot of cuing from me. I was intentional to only speak briefly and succinctly every six or seven minutes to simply invite them to notice what they were noticing.

I distinctly recall how during this particular meditation I kept noticing the urge to talk and prompt them to notice specific elements of their experience. Given that I knew going into the mediation I wanted to be deliberate in creating silent space for them to practice, my awareness of my urge to speak was more pronounced. During my experience of the meditation, I made it *my* practice to witness my strong desire to speak and intentionally sit with those desires without acting upon them. For every desire to speak that arouse, I would just feel it; I would just be present with that desire without engaging it. The desire would quickly pass the moment I noticed it and breathed into it.

When we opened our eyes, teachers were invited to write about that meditation experience (in a Lived Experience Description form) for a couple minutes before we shared out. I did the same. I wrote about the slipping and regaining of my attention throughout the meditation. I noted the times when I felt I was fully present (in my body and with my breath) and the times when I was not present (when I was in my head, judging myself and the experience). As teachers shared out one by one, I scanned the room, reading body language. One teacher had her head down and would not make eye contact with me or the group. She even pulled her physical body out of the circle to sit up against the wall behind her. I felt her disconnecting. I felt her draw her energy out of the circle. I was fully present in that moment in my teaching. I leaned into the uncomfortable feelings I could sense emanating from her. I felt her anger. I felt her resistance. I felt her disconnection. And just like I had done with sitting with my discomfort during my meditation, I sat with the feeling of her disconnection, anger, and resistance. I noticed. I breathe. I became curious.

After this meditation, I was in prime position to really attune to her and the other teachers in the group since my body and mind were calm and settled. At that moment, I was meeting them with a rich quality of attention that I had cultivated during the

meditation. I noticed that as I listened to the individual teachers when they shared their experiences that I kept emotionally listening to this teacher who had removed her body from the circle. It was if her energy kept drawing my attention towards her. I felt as if I had to keep breathing deeply and slowly; almost like I was cleansing the energy she was emitting before I allowed it to enter my body. After everyone in the group had chosen to share their experience, there was a moment where space opened up for her to choose whether or not she desired to speak. I reminded the group that there was no pressure to share. In this moment of permission to remain silent, she chose to speak.

What I remember recalling was that she had been silently speaking volumes the whole time before she even uttered a word. Her body language and disposition spoke loud and clear in the silent space between us. The moment she began to talk, I remember drawing all my attention to her—looking at her even though she kept her head down and would not make eye contact with me. In that lack of eye contact connection between us, I remember feeling scared and nervous about what she was going to express. I was afraid that she was mad a me. I was both curious about what she had to say while also so afraid that I had done something to make her mad. I noticed my tendency to take her experience personally.

When she did open up about what she felt during the meditation, as uncomfortable and nervous as I felt my body to be, I listened with my full attention; with my heart, head, and spirit. I kept my eyes on her as she spoke even though she was looking down. I engaged the connection by also leaning my physical body forward almost as if to signal to her that I wanted to hear all about her experience, even though on the inside, I was scared and wanted to pull away. But I did not. I remained fully present; trusting myself, the moment, and her emotions to guide us.

As I listened to her, I could feel my *teacher Presence* pervade the space; I was *being* present and *being* fully myself amidst the inner fear and uncertainty. As she talked, I responded only to acknowledge her feelings. I recall deeply desiring for her to feel like she could trust me with what she had to share—trust me not to take her experience personally. Breathing and *being* present, I believe, conveyed that truth; that I did care to know how she felt *especially* since it appeared to be a emotionally upsetting meditation for her.

She was angry. She said that writing about the experience after it happened help her to process her anger and understand where it came from. When she shared out, she said she did not initially want to share her feelings with me. She said that as she wrote, she swore she would not tell me about how mad she was….at me….for talking….and making her think….during a meditation….when you are not "supposed" to think….which made her think…..some more.…that she was a bad meditator….and that she was bad at whatever she tried so hard to do. I could feel it; my *teacher Presence* in that micro-miracle moment was swelling in the space between us. My dispositional *being*-ness was pulsing and radiating a very soft and heartfelt compassion and care for her. In the moment she began to share her annoyance and anger, I recall feeling light, loving, and curious. I was fully there. In this moment of authentic connection between the two of us, much like Hope describes in the micro-miracle moment with her crying kindergartner, it felt as if everyone else in the room disappeared. I believe that my desire to *be* present for this teacher coupled with a non-judgmental and curious attitude created a micro-miracle moment where she was invited to process through strong feelings which then lead to a transfiguration of the emotional energy within her body and between us from that of anger to understanding.

After she shared her experience and feelings with me (and the whole group), I felt even *more* present with and more connected to her. I felt that being fully present allowed me to *become* my desired imagination of the type of teacher I always aspire to be: compassionate, reverential, kind, and respectful. In my experience of this moment, it felt as if my open and non-judgmental awareness and attitude created a space between us where compassion and love could flow unobstructed. It felt as if she could feel my compassion and curiosity for her. It felt as if she could feel the genuine presence and love I desired to embody in that moment. It felt as if her feeling these healing emotions emanating from me invited her to soften around her agitation and anger. It was as if my *teacher Presence* created an energetic bond between us that allowed her to transform her inner emotional state through processing strong emotions in a safe and accepting space.

As I listened to her experience, she brought her physical body back into the circle and began to make eye contact with me again. I was feeling her *Presence* pervade the space between us; we were connecting. Noticing the invisible inner and external

dynamics of this moment, I called the group's attention to what just occurred between the two of us. I invited teachers to notice how moments when another is experiencing strong emotions, our capacity to maintain our own emotional presence and equilibrium allows us to engage connection—to be fully present for their experience in a way that need not trigger our own inner emotional reactions. And while that practice of not taking another's emotions personally takes deliberate practice, it allows us to deeply connect to another when they are most in need of understanding and compassion. It was a beautiful teachable moment, that micro-miracle moment of connection and relationship restoration that occurred in *real*-teacher-time. There appeared to be a co-production of *Presences* in that moment—a mirco-miracle moment of healing for the both of us as we *became* ourselves through our *being* fully present together. And as Hanh (2015) suggests, this is gift:

> The greatest gift we can make to others is our true presence…When you are concentrated, mind and body together, you produce your true presence…You become real, the other person becomes real, and life is real in that moment. (p. 112)

PAPER THREE

INTEGRATION OF THE SELF THROUGH DIS-POSITIONING THE SELF

Introduction

Image 3.1 River at Ballynahinch Castle, Connemara, Ireland

Fluid

I would love to live
Like a river flows,
Carried by the surprise
Of its own unfolding.

This paper begins with a poem by the Irish poet John O'Donohue (2007) and an image of a river flowing on the grounds of *Ballynahinch Castle* in Connemara, Ireland. As this paper intends to explore the nature, process, and art of *being* and *becoming* a teacher in the 21st century, I felt this poem captures with such resonant beauty the effortless ease in which a teacher's perpetual *becoming* may enliven her spirit with the surprise of who she is called to *be* in moments of her teaching practice.

I traveled to Connemara, Ireland during the data analysis phase of this study to immerse myself in the landscape where O'Donohue was born and raised since I draw so

heavily on his theory of thresholds and Celtic Spirituality in this work. To be completely transparent, there is no rational reason for why I became infatuated with O'Donohue's work that I hit the pause button on my fast-paced, busy life as a mother and full time graduate student to spend three weeks, alone, at a seaside cottage in the West Coast of Ireland simply *being* like the river in O'Donohue's poem. All I know is that my intuition guided me there; encouraging me to accept an invitation to engage in a completely different way of *being* with myself to explore who I was *becoming*. I often refer to this time in Ireland as my "soul-batical," because it invited me cross a threshold out of all the "doing" in my life and trust the inner invisible experience of *being* fully present in allowing my soul to guide me through my experiences. O'Donohue (1997) reminds us:

> One of the greatest thresholds of reality is the threshold between the visible and the invisible. The visible is that which we can see, and the invisible is that which we cannot see; beauty, silence, time, sounds. Some of the central realities of our lives subsist in this invisible world. (audiobook)

As a post-intentional phenomenological researcher, I seek to explore phenomenon that arise from the invisible world. In this study of the cultivation of the phenomenon I am calling *teacher Presence*, a reverence for the invisible world and acknowledgement and awareness that, as O'Donohue (1997) says, the visible world is often just the first shoreline of the invisible world, I aim to explore the ways in which the process of *being* and *becoming* a teacher is intimately bound up in and through the inherent invisibleness of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*. This paper seeks to make visible, if only for a fleeting moment, the art of *being* and *becoming* a teacher in the 21st century in the Western world where crippling stress, an epidemic of burnout, and increased bureaucratic control appear to significantly threaten a teacher's capacity to *be* and *become* a teacher who is emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually well.

Becoming a teacher is conceptualized throughout this piece as a perpetual flow and fluid exchange of energy between one's *being*-ness in the moment and one's desire to *become* self-actualized throughout the stressors of the profession. Through an exploration of phenomenological material of teachers' lived experiences descriptions, interview data, and John O'Donohue's (2008) theory of thresholds and Mezirow's (1997) Transformative Learning Theory, this paper explores the process of *being* and *becoming* one's authentic self through the embodiment of the role of "teacher" through Kairos

moments— "pure, perfect, unpredictable, and uncontrollable" moments that possesses possibility (van Manen, 2015, p. 52). This paper also aims to explore the manner in which increased bureaucratic control that relies on rigid and standardized accountability measures, teacher-value added evaluative measures, and high-stakes testing may instigate teacher dis-trust in themselves, their capacity, and their courage to *become* the teacher they desire and believe themselves capable of *being*.

I begin by articulating the spiritual[12] calling that is teaching so to draw attention to the invisible psychic dimensions of the practice in order to create a framework and grounding for my phenomenological exploration. Through an exploration of the phenomenological research, it becomes thinkable that *being* and *becoming* a teacher is entangled with *being* and *becoming* one's self. Next, I leverage the theoretical perspective of threshold theory (O'Donohue, 1997) to explore the process of *being* and *becoming* a teacher in its complex, nebulous, and perpetual unfoldment. O'Donohue's threshold theory provides a stable orientation in which to re-perceive teacher stress as potentially productive; as moments of "dis-orientation" that invite one into an inner exploration and actualization of values, passions, and core purpose.

Alongside the use of threshold theory, I leverage Mezirow's (1991, 1995, 1996) Transformative Learning Theory to explore how the first crucial element, a "disorienting dilemma," serves as an invitation to enter into the Kairos moment (van Manen, 2015). Kairos moments will be explored as places where teachers are invited to engage pedagogical perceptiveness that involve relying on tacit or intuitive knowledge that inspire them to know what to do when they don't know what to do (van Manen, 2015). As this paper will explore, the process of *being* and *becoming* a teacher is deeply connected to a teacher's capacity to *be* and *become* fully present (mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually) in the moments of her teaching so to integrate forms of knowing from the different "lived dimensions" (van Manen, 1990) of pathic pedagogical tact (e.g., relational, situational, corporeal, and temporal) with a trust in her inner invisible, intuitive inner knowing.

[12] In this text, spirituality does not seek to convey any religious affiliation or evocation of religious beliefs or assumptions. Spirituality refers to one's relationship to the self; a deep, authentic, and honest connection with one's desires, values, Truth, and authentic nature.

- ∞ *Provocation #1: …Transfiguring institutional distrust and control may provoke threshold crossing into...*
- ∞ *Provocation #2: ... Kairos moments where a teacher may cultivate trust in her intuition and inner knowing which may provoke…*
- ∞ *Provocation #3:...Becoming the teacher she desires to be through the act of dis-positioning herself.*

Teaching as Spiritual Calling

"All education is ultimately education of the whole person" (van Manen, 1990, p. 166). This may be profoundly true for teachers who are in the perpetual process of *being* and *becoming* themselves in and through the practice of teaching. I have been engaged in teaching as a spiritual calling for over two decades. As an elementary teacher educator at a large mid-western teaching and land grant university with a research focus, I encourage aspiring teachers to expand their perception of what it means to *be* a teacher. For *being* a teacher is more that delivering content and maintaining a collaborative classroom environment; teaching is human development work. As becomes apparent through this phenomenological exploration of the cultivation of *teacher Presence*, *being* and *becoming* a teacher is also human development work— a perpetual development of the selfhood of the teacher.

Marianne Williamson (2012) says:

> A job is an exchange of energy in which you do a material task and someone provides money in exchange. A calling, however, is an organic field of energy that emerges from the deepest aspects of who you are. (p. 117)

Ask any teacher to tell you the story of their path to teaching and a majority may most likely express that they felt "called" to teach. When I work with teachers through *Present Teacher*™ Training, I invite them to re-connect with their story of feeling called to teach by sharing it aloud with a peer through a mindful listening exercise. Teachers partner up and sit across from one another, ready to hold the space for the other to share. Each teacher gets four minutes to talk while their partner listens without interruption. As teachers engage the mindful listening exercise, I allow my attention drift around the

room, noticing the energetic connection between the partner groups. Every single time I invite teachers to engage in this exercise, the emotionality in the room becomes palpable. I see laughter, connection, smiles, tears, and head nods. I attune to the feelings pervading the room, and I can feel passion, dedication, love, and purpose expressed in just an 8-minute window of time.

In my two decades as a teacher and teacher educator and throughout my work as a phenomenological educational researcher of teacher well-being, it is apparent that teaching is not merely intellectual work; it is spiritual work as well. When you ask teachers why they teach, they tend to express what Lortie (1975) describes in his seminal work, *Schoolteacher*, as "psychic rewards." Lortie (1975) describes three types of career rewards of teachers as being extrinsic, ancillary, and psychic. Psychic or "intrinsic rewards," the feeling as if one has reached a student or instilled a love of learning in a child are often cited as the most rewarding (Lortie, 1975, p. 111).

In *Teaching to Transgress*, hooks (1994) alludes to the sacred spiritual dimension of teaching when she reminds us that teaching as the practice of freedom compels us to share not just information but to share in the spiritual growth of our students and ourselves. Teaching is entangled work. Palmer (1997) suggests that the tangles of teaching have three sources: first, the subjects we teacher are complex and our knowledge of content is always partial; second, the students we teach are even more complex and larger than life than our content; and third, the inner landscape of the teacher (intellectual, emotional, and spiritual) create the nexus of which the teacher "teaches who they are " (p. 15). Of the three tangles of teaching alluded to by Palmer (1997) (content area knowing, student/ relational knowing, and self-knowing), the self-knowing thread is most fundamental and rarely given the appropriate amount of attention and awareness. The spiritual dimension of teaching that explores the "diverse ways we answer the heart's longing to be connected with the largeness of life— a longing that animates love and work, especially the work called teaching" (Palmer, 1997, p. 16) is less understood in terms of its connection with the process of *being* and a *becoming* an emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually well-teacher. I engage in this exploration through examining the ways that *being* a teacher in a Western culture dominated by pervasive neoliberal practices creates moments of opportunity and possibility (i.e., Kairos moment)

for a teacher to *become* self-actualized (i.e., embodying identity and integrity) through trusting herself, her intuition, and her calling to teach.

In this paper I explore through the phenomenological material of teacher lived experience descriptions the complex process of teaching *being* and *becoming* that appears to take shape in the middle of the interactive nexus of a teacher's capacity to be present in the midst of contradiction between what she feels "ought" to *do* and what she believes she "desires" to *be* to best serve her students and her own self-actualization and *becoming*-ness. The exploration of the phenomenon reveals that teachers who engage the threshold where the contradiction between external demands and internal desires meet with mindful awareness, trust in themselves, and their intuition engage Kairos moments (van Manen, 2015, p. 52) where they empower themselves to *become* the teacher feel called to *be* through the embodiment of dispositions like compassion, care, and kindness.

Provocation #1: …Transfiguring institutional distrust and control may provoke threshold crossing…

Our current cultural consciousness may be infecting and affecting what it means to *be* and *become* a teacher in today's classrooms. Professional standardization of the teaching practice and increased bureaucratic control through "evidence- based" teaching and student test score evaluation that attempt to test, quantify, and rationalize education may inadvertently and unconsciously dis-empower and dis-integrate our school's most valuable and precious resource: the personhood of the teacher.

Van Manen (1991) says that "[m]any teachers find themselves fighting silent battles and personal crusades against the blind forces of bureaucratic, administrative, and political structures in order to preserve the wholesome quality to their students' educational experiences" (p. 66). It becomes thinkable that teachers may also find themselves fighting silent inner battles to preserve their sense of worth and well-ness against these same blind forces of bureaucratic, administrative, and political control. Direct threats to the personhood of the teacher can come in the form of external stressors that are systemic of bureaucratic control. Some examples are:

> a constant threat of teacher accountability for student performance; unsettling changes due to school transfers, building closings, and loss of job; loss of autonomy and control over the curriculum; excessive workload

> leading to lack of spontaneity and creativity; perpetual changes and expectations that are in constant flux with school reform efforts; conflict between school policy and one's own professional beliefs that can compromise teacher integrity; increase in workflow management; quantity replacing quality as the job becomes more bureaucratic than professional. (Larrivee, 2012, p. 7)

In the 21st century, neoliberal reforms have transformed what it means to teach and *be* a teacher. Increased control and accountability measures have created a trend of evidence-based teaching that rests on simplistic views of teaching and learning. Excessive amounts of energy and attention directed to external evaluation measure of teacher performance and professionalism may have a significant impact on the way a teacher is *being* in her teaching and who she is *becoming* through being a teacher. O'Donohue (1999) cautions us that "[m]uch of modern life is lived in the territory of externality; if we succumb completely to the external, we will lose all sense of inner and personal presence. We will be become the ultimate harvesters of absence, namely, ghosts in our own lives" (p. 228). It becomes thinkable that the excessive focus on the evaluation of the external conditions of teaching leaves our teachers feeling distrusted, incapable of exercising professional agency, and disconnected from their wisdom and intuition.

Manifestations of organizational control can restrict a teacher's capacity to exercise personal agency in educational decision-making. When a teacher feels they do not have professional agency in making decisions that best meet the needs of the specific contexts of their classroom and needs of their students, they may internalize this as a felt lack of trust in their abilities. Threats of loss of job, security, autonomy, and control keep a teacher on edge in ways that serves to distract them from connecting with themselves and the present moments in their teaching.

Exploring the vibrant lived experiences descriptions of *being* and *becoming* a spiritually, emotionally, and mentally well teacher in the Western world in current times of increased bureaucratic control, measurement, and evaluation is important. It is important because this exploration directs our full attention to the ways our cultural obsession with external, visible measurements of accountability may weaken relational trust of the teacher. If a teacher feels untrustworthy, this belief has the potential to

unconsciously, yet insidiously, trigger a internal dialogue self-doubt that chips away at her self-esteem. Not believing herself to be capable or efficacious, a teacher falls into the burnout cycle where over time, she disconnects further and further from herself and her belief that she is capable in her calling.

The increased focus of attention on incessant testing and teacher evaluations may unconsciously convey a deep felt sense of distrust in our teachers' innate ability to be present for students (and themselves) in ways that are healthy, healing, and connective. Ruth, an elementary music teacher with over 25 years of experience, shared with me how she feels the pressure to perform and "get through" all the content at an accelerated rate impact her capacity to be present for the needs of her students. She said: "When you get stressed about the accountability piece, it's a core standard and it is going in the grade book, and it has to be done by such and such a date, you are serving the checklist and the standard and not the student." Ruth explained how the pressure she feels to cover content triggers anger and frustration. "I feel angry because what I want to do in the deep part of my soul is go with the flow."

Ruth articulates how the pressure to get through lessons to check off all the standards keeps her from engaging "flow" and trusting that "deep part of her soul" that knows what is most important in the moments in her teaching. I asked her to describe what that felt like— to be in the flow with what she knows in the deep part of soul in her teaching of music:

> I want to see where the kids are at. What they need… figure out how to play that note…not figure out how to play this for the checklist. And they would have all learned something and moved ahead. It would just happen and be okay. So they could have just been in the joy moment instead of feeling nervous that this is too hard to do.

In this description, Ruth illustrates teaching that is responsive to the moment, the students, and her intuition. Van Manen (2015) describes these responsive moments in teaching as moments of pedagogical tact—a type of teaching where the teacher trusts and draws on her intuitive sensibilities and sensitivities so to be responsive to the needs of the child in the moment. As van Manen (2015) describes, pedagogical tact "involves us in distinguishing actively and/ or reflectively what is good or right and what is life enhancing, just, and supportive from what is not good, wrong, unjust, or damaging in the

ways we act, live, and deal with children" (p. 20). Ruth's articulation of experiencing in response to feeling pressured to get through the checklist and "do" teaching in a way that dis-connects her from her soul's longing for the pedagogical flow where connection and joy are felt for her denies her access to experiencing the "primordial adult-child relation that is biological and cultural, ancient and present, mundane and mysterious, sensuous and sensitive to the ethical demands as it is experienced in pedagogical relations, situations, and actions" (van Manen, 2015, p. 20).

Institutional Control and a Feeling of Distrust

Being the type of teacher one feels called to *become*, responsive to the needs of the students, trusting one's intuition to guide one's actions during instruction, and discovering a sense of self-efficacy in meeting challenging moments from a place of confidence can be seen as constantly under threat by dominant powers of the technological rational mindset. Pedagogies that are pathic in nature (e.g., empathic, sympathetic) "always risk being taken over by technocratic rational understanding and made efficient and productive, [and] technical rationalizations become so confining that the possibility of maintaining pedagogical relations between teacher and students is completely thwarted by nonpedagogical themes imposed by overly bureaucratized powers and central administrative policies" (van Manen, 2015, p. 89). While a teacher's *being*-ness in the classroom and in the moments of her teaching may be significantly confined and controlled, her capacity to *become* the teacher she desires to *be* and to self-actualize through the profession of teaching may be stymied. The phenomenological material in this study demonstrates how a teacher's *being*-ness and her capacity to *become* are intimately bound up in each other. In fact, I contend that her *being-ness* and who she *becomes* are mutually constitutive.

If a teacher's *being*-ness in the classroom is impacted and influenced by the external dictates of observable performance measures in such a way that she feels confined, controlled, and incapacitated in making professional pedagogically tactful decisions that arise from her intuitive and pathic sensitivities, I contend that, over time, she may feel a sense of intuitional distrust *in* and judgment *of* her capacities as a teacher. If as teachers, we teach who we are as Palmer (1997) suggests, and what we do as teachers is hyper controlled by evaluative measures of performance that can only attempt

to measure the "observable" elements of teaching and learning, it feels intuitive to explore how the personhood of the teacher is impacted. Based on the phenomenological material in this study, I suggest that teachers who feel distrusted and judged by administration and/or institutionalized performance evaluation measures tend to internalize this perception in a way that they come to distrust their very own selves; thus disconnecting them from trusting their critically important intuitive, non-cognitive, and pathic sources of teacher knowing-ness that humanize one's work. It also becomes apparent through the exploration of teachers' lived experience descriptions in this study that when a teacher feels overly controlled or judged in her teaching, it can disconnect her from engaging those parts of her self, her intuition and pathic knowing-ness, that bring her professional practice to life in personally meaningful and purposeful ways. Engaging in this exploration of the ways that institutional control may potentially convey a sense of distrust in the selfhood of the teacher is important to the exploration of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*, because the way a teacher feels she is able to *be* in the moments of her teaching may influence her capacity to self-actualize and *become* her most authentic self through her calling.

In his book, *Pedagogical Tact: Knowing what to do when you don't know what to do*, van Manen (2015) suggests that pedagogical teaching, where one is responsive to the pathic dimensions of the practice, is improvisational. Teaching in a manner that is responsive, connective, and "in the moment" with students, where one embodies a tact for knowing what to say and do in contingent situations, "relies in part on a kind of tacit or intuitive knowledge" (p. 81).

> Tactful acting is always Kairotic: contingent, immediate, situational, improvisational. And tact as a form of human interacting means that we are in a thinkingly active manner in a situation: emotionally, responsively, thoughtfully. (van Manen, 2015, p. 82)

If knowing what to do when one doesn't know what to do in teaching depends on a teacher's capacity to tune into the present moment, trust her intuition, and allow the pathic dimensions (i.e., emotional) to inform her work and her *being*-ness in her teaching, how does increased bureaucratic control and the pressure to perform discourage and diminish a teacher's connection to these critical pathic points of knowing?

Ruth feels anger when she experiences the tension between what she is told she has to teach and when to teach it for student performance measures and what she, a veteran music teacher with vast experience, feels and believes is necessary to create a musical experience for her students. In her LED (lived experience description), she describes the impediments to *being* present and trusting her intuition and pathic knowing as a music teacher in current times. She says:

> kid behavior, the clock, not being able to read the room and find out what they need for that flow experience for that day, and something else on the list that needs to be done while it is not the ideal thing to happen that day.

For Hope, the obstacles that block her from accessing and trusting her innate intuition in her teaching are her own inner judgments and workload stress. I asked Hope to describe what she experienced internally when she felt judged, either by herself or during observations, and how she felt those judgments and the stress of teaching impacted her capacity to *be* present and herself as she taught. Her experience of stress and judgments were described as feeling heavy and negatively impacting her mood state. She said:

> I think it weighs you down. It alters your joy. Overall it brings down your mood and that impacts your *presence* to be neutral and more open…I just feel like it brings your mood down, which makes you feel less happy— and kids pick up on that.

Hope mentioned the suppression of joy teaching as happening when external stressors to perform and "do" teaching heavily influence her work or when she gets observed. In our interview, I asked Hope to tell me more about how being observed impacted how she came to see herself in the role of teacher. She said:

> When we talk about presence and people's energy, that is one of my stressors— having another body in my space. Those are where my inner judgments come into play. I wonder, 'Oh, what are they thinking about my teaching.' That is one thing that I have really been working on. Saying to myself, 'I don't know what they are thinking. They are just here.' So that is a lot of my teacher stress— getting observed or having those inner judgments so I've been working on that with my breathing and noticing that I'm feeling really self-conscious about that. That has been helping me this year. Naming that.

For Hope, she equates being observed with being judged. Hope is not alone in feeling distrust or judged as a teacher during observations. In, *Professional Capital*, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) articulate how observations can be source of perceived judgment of the teacher, potentially exacerbating a teachers' perception of themselves as incompetent in their role:

> You can't make a proper judgment about a teacher's performance in isolation if you behave like a clipboard king or queen on a quick classroom visit to fill out a checklist. Dropping in unannounced on a teacher's lesson for an evaluation, a walk-through, or an instructional round, it's easy to take a dim view of the teacher who is administering a routine test, or just having quiet time. But this view is taken out of context, which judges the teacher against ideal models of instruction rather than against the backdrop of classroom realities. (p. 63)

In Hope's experience, being observed triggers a sense of feeling that she is being judged from a narrowly defined, or brief snapshot, perspective. When teachers are observed in isolation from an administrator with whom they have no relationship, it may exacerbate a feeling of not being seen as a whole person— as the whole teacher they really know themselves capable of *being* and/or *becoming*. Hope's heightened self-awareness allows her to witness how being observed and feeling judged intensifies her own inner judge. I asked Hope to explain how her mindfulness practice allowed her to see this connection between feeling judged by external conditions and how this triggers in her a judgmental inner roommate commentary. She said:

> Mindfulness helps me be more aware of the emotions. I feel like I am noticing more and more feelings of stress or anxiety, and I can name it and then figure out how to focus on the breath. The idea that everything comes back to the breath connects with *presence* for me because when I connect with the breath, my breath impacts my *presence*.

Thomas, a first year teacher, describes how being observed coupled with the stress to get through so much curriculum worsened a sense of disconnect from himself and distrust in his capacity to be the teacher he knows himself capable of *being*. Thomas explained to me how during observations, he feels very "unsafe." He expressed that it feels unjust and unfair to him for only one individual (in this case his principal with whom he did not have a trusting relationship) to hold that much power over him—as in one person being the sole reporter of his capacity and performance as a teacher. He

shared with me his desire in having multiple mentors or peers coming into his classroom to observe him teach; people who he had authentic relationships with and whom he trusted. Thomas then described one particular observation where his principal asked him if he liked his students all equally, which was a question he felt was "outta bounds."

"I didn't feel safe with her being the only one," he says. Once Thomas said the word safe aloud, I sensed a shift in his awareness as we talked. He paused for several moments and then said that perhaps his lack of feeling safe in his professional role created the conditions for him to *not* be more playful with students and to miss connecting with them on a human level. "I didn't think of that 'till now," Thomas said during our interview. "I feel bad. I wish I could have been more playful with them, but stuff had to get done."

"Looking back," Thomas says, "I think the biggest thing was me not being very playful. Perhaps she saw me talking to a student in a certain way. Everything had to get done a certain way, and I was just very focused on getting it done." Thomas's cites the constant pressure to "get it all done" and get *through* his lesson as being inherently stress provoking.

I asked Thomas to describe the felt-ness of this stress— the stress of having to get so much done in a short amount of time, and what his stress felt like and how it impacted his teaching or his *presence* with his students. Like Hope, he described the feeling as "heavy." "A lot of things were heavy. I wasn't very polite to students….I wasn't very playful, and I was focused on getting things done," he said. Thomas discussed how much pressure he felt to do all the things he was *supposed* to do as a teacher and that in doing all those things, he feels he became the teacher he never desired to be: one who disconnected from his students and began to see *them* as things to control. It may be read that Thomas's tendency to assume a depersonalized view of his students is a result of the accumulation of stress in the emotional and spiritual body systems. Depersonalization is a hallmark manifestation of teacher burnout (Laravee, 2012; Maslach, 1996; 1998; 2001; 2003). We also know that "[s]ymptoms of chronic stress are feelings of fragmentation and chasing of time—of not being able to be present" (Lama & Tutu, 2016, p. 97).

As Thomas processed his experiences in our interview of feeling pressured to perform and "get through" so many things in his teaching on a daily basis, he came to the

realization that his lack of playfulness with his students was impacted and influenced by a feeling that teaching was serious, regimented (i.e., moving quickly through lesson plans in lockstep order), and all about control. He also appears to process the connection between teaching feeling "heavy" and how this heaviness of the role significantly diminished his capacity to be himself with his students. He said:

> Things were heavy and not playful…I wasn't myself. I wasn't enjoying work. I hated being at work. Things were not moving with ease. Everything was heavy. Everything was serious…and the stress dragged on me…
>
> The students were part of what needed to get done. I had to get through the lesson, and the students weren't part of it. It was almost like they were things. There was no life to it. I had to teach these things— students— they were in my lesson plan, and they were supposed to do a certain thing. And when things didn't go well, I saw them as things. I didn't see them as human.

Thomas's courage to share how in feeling so much pressure to perform and get *through* the curriculum (as opposed to get *into* the curriculum in an authentic way*)*, he developed a depersonalize perspective of his students. Seeing his students as things he need to control to get through the lesson helps us to explore the interconnected nature of increased institutional control and its impact on who a teacher is *being* and *becoming*. In this moment that Thomas describes, he appears to desire control over his students. He expected them to *be* and perform in a certain way so he could get through lessons in the manner that was expected of him.

"When you are being controlled, you are treated as an object rather than as a subject" (O'Donohue, 1997, p. 139). The phenomenological material demonstrates how Thomas's students *became* objects in his eyes in his attempt to control them to contort to the demands and pressures he felt to perform and accomplish as a teacher. I contend that Thomas's impulse to control his students was intimately connected to and bound up with his perception of feeling dehumanized and controlled as a teacher. I further suggest that feeling pressured to perform, especially as a new teacher, and feeling judged through observations by an administrator with which he had no relationship exacerbated a feeling within himself that he, too, was an object to being controlled by the institution. If a teacher's capacity to *be* themselves and in touch with their intuition, wisdom, and

emotionality in their teaching is diminished through excessive accountability and performative measures that make them feel that they must constantly "get through" lessons to get it all done, and look perfect doing it, it becomes plausible that they not only develop a callous, depersonalized perception of students, but may also develop a callous, depersonalized perception of themselves.

Provocation #1: …Transfiguring institutional distrust and control may provoke threshold crossing into...

Provocation #2: … Kairos moments where a teacher may cultivate trust in her intuition and inner knowing…

Institutional Control and Distrust as Invitation

"The problem is not the existence of stressors, which cannot be avoided; stress is simply the brain's way of signaling that something is important. The problem—or perhaps the opportunity—is how we respond to this stress" (Lama & Tutu, 2016, p. 98). Psychologist and leading researcher on stress, Elissa Epel, and molecular biologist, Elizabeth Blackburn, have found that chronic stress wears down our telomeres, the protective caps on our DNA that slow down the onset of illness and the aging process. They also discovered that it is not just stress but "our thought patterns in general that impact our telomeres" which in effect reveals "our cells are actually 'listening to our thoughts'" (Lama & Tutu, 2016, p. 98).

There is no question that teaching in the 21st century in the Western world is stressful. Many teachers are fleeing the profession at alarming rates due to the growing dehumanization of the profession through the increased emphasis on teacher and student testing, evaluation, and inspection measures. However, given what we know about stress, that it is not inherently the external events or experiences that dictate how much stress we feel or experience, but rather our perception of the stress that makes all the difference, the phenomenological material in this study suggests that a teacher could leverage instances of institutional distrust, control, and standardization as opportunities to cultivate self-trust and self-efficacy. Through the phenomenological material, it is revealed that mindfulness can empower teachers to use experiences of distrust and control as opportunities to *be* in

the present moment, trust their inner guidance (e.g., instincts and intuition), and discover their innate capacity and potential to *become* the teacher they deeply desire to *be.*

Crossing Thresholds in Kairos Moments

O'Donohue (2008) calls us to remember the sacredness of threshold crossing. For thresholds are vast frontiers of infinite possibility that invite us to explore, engage, and embody our *becoming.* He says that thresholds "cannot be crossed without the heart being passionately engaged and woken up" (p. 48). Thresholds tend to arrive before us quickly and subtly— we must be attentive and present for their invitations. Thresholds also appear at points of contradiction where one feels tension in choosing between different states of *being*-ness. I contend that teachers can feel intense tension or contradiction in their *being*-ness on a daily basis in teaching. Thomas felt pressured to perform and "get through" all the curriculum that was demanded of him, and given that this felt "heavy" for him, I infer his *being*-ness that arose in response to the pressure was not in alignment with the *being*-ness he valued as a teacher. There appears to be a contradiction between what he feels he must *do* as a teacher and how he wants to *be* as a teacher. Hope discussed the tension she feels when observed and feels judged on whether or not her *being*-ness as a teacher is effective or enough.

O'Donohue (1997) says that "it is always at the threshold where the two sides of contradiction meet that the greatest growth actually happens" (audio clip). An exploration of the process of *being* and *becoming* a teacher and the ways this process is entangled with the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* necessitates an investigation of the happenings within those hidden opportunities often found at the threshold where one experiences a contradiction between how they feel they *should be* as defined by external forces and the feeling of who they know they *need to be* in the moment to serve their students to the best of their capacity. Thresholds become "an *inner* edge of growth and change that invites one to go beyond their current edge to step into unknown territory that opens one up to new ways of engagement and relating" (O'Donohue, 2008, p. 48). In effect, a threshold is an invitation into Kairos moments in one's teaching where teachers are invited to engage a new way of *being*-ness with the self, the world, and with others.

Kairos Moments

Van Manen (2015) describes the in-the-moment-reflection and immediacy of our actions and responses as entering into *Kairos time*. Kairos is the mythical Greek god of timeless time, and a "Kairos moment has been described as a transformative moment of chance, depending on our ability and willingness to seize the opportunity that is offered within it" (Murchadha, 2013 as cited in van Manen, 2015, p. 52). Like thresholds, Kairos moments are often "brought on by pain, agony, and feelings of frustration and desperation" (van Manen, 2015, p. 52). The reason that points of contradiction or emotional pain are so productive is because they force us to be present with what is happening. That is why Kairos moments and threshold are often accompanied by emotional, mental, or spiritual (i.e., contradiction of values) distress— they grab one's attention and invite one inside one's self to really explore and discover what is happening where the two sides of contradiction meet. O'Donohue (2007) provides an important distinction about the manner in which time, and the present moment, can be engaged with different states of *being*-ness:

> The Greeks believed that time had a secret structure. There was the moment of 'epiphany' when time suddenly opened and something was revealed in luminous clarity. There was the moment of *'krisis'* when time got entangled and directions became confused and contradictory. There was also the moment of '*kairos'*; this was the propitious moment. Time opened up with kindness and promise. All the energies cohered to offer a fecund occasion of initiative, creativity, and promise. (p. 22)

The lived experiences of teachers in this study suggest that the pressure to "do" teaching in a way that was not in alignment with what they felt resonated with how they desired to *be* in their teaching influenced their engagement with teacher time through 'krisis' moments— where the present moment, and ostensibly, their sense of self, got entangled and confused. However, these places of contradiction in one's teaching may *become* places of possibility where one is invited to lean into and trust what they know to be true, needed, and necessary in their professional practice in the present/ Kairos moment. Ruth describes one such Kairos moment where she enabled herself to respond emotionally, intuitively, and thoughtfully in the present moment of her teaching. This lived experience description of a time she took a risk and trusted her intuition to guide her

actions demonstrates how not feeling pressured to accomplish a specific goal or follow a rigid agenda for the lesson allowed her to *be* herself and fully present in her teaching:

> I took a risk and introduced ukulele to my 3rd grade students. The impetus for this risk was that I needed to lead my students in something fun and engaging, since I had given up on the fact that I didn't have updated materials for engaging students. [In this particular lesson], I felt as if I was in my personal teacher 'zone' of discovery learning. The kids were very excited, and I brought in the required self-calm in order to learn something physically complicated…I was able to keep my *light and cheerful* (emphasis original) intention for the day even with students who seem to always need to insert themselves over the rest of the class.

Core elements of mindful awareness are intentional attention and attitude. Ruth speaks specifically about the impact that her intentional "light and cheerful" disposition had on the learning space and her students:

> I didn't have an agenda for the lesson. I was just in the moment; in my groove of task analysis and what the next micro-step was that we all needed to take to continue to have progress. I felt like a good teacher. The kids felt like good learners. My body was calm—the kids were calm. The space felt energized and focused.

In this excerpt, Ruth is articulating the way her calm and fully present *being*-ness guided her through the "micro-steps" that arrived to keep stoking the flow and engagement of the lesson and student learning. Ruth goes on to recount how a high level of attention and focus pervaded through the learning space, her students, and herself during this Kairos moment:

> The music sounded great and the time was too short. What stands out to me is the mood of the whole class, my enjoyment, their enjoyment, and HIGH LEVEL OF ATTENTION (emphasis original) and high level of success.

For Ruth, not have a calculated or rigid agenda of what she needed to "get through" created an opportunity for her to trust the micro-steps in the moment, her intuition, and her students' responses to enhance connection and concentration:

> I would notice things, but give advice/help to the whole group: 'loose balanced hands; don't grip, trust your nervous system to think/feel/know instead of having to tip the ukulele and look; some of you may never trusted your thinking/feeling system. You have not paid so much attention to your fingertips before.'

Perhaps it was Ruth's connection to the present moment and trust in her intuition through the intentional act of calming her mind and body before she engaged the lesson that allowed her to *be* present in the teachable moment in such a way that her *presence* infused the space with a profound sense of trust in one's self and in her students. Trust in herself and the Kairos moment where time appeared to open up with kindness and promise (O'Donohue, 2007) translated into encouraging her students to trust their own intuition, bodies, fingers, and musical instincts.

Trusting the Moment, the Self, and Intuition

> No threshold need be a threat, but rather an invitation and a promise… It demands great courage and also a sense of trust in whatever is emerging. This becomes essential when a threshold opens suddenly in front of you, one for which you had no preparation…. Whatever comes, the great sacrament of life will remain faithful to us, blessing us always with visible signs of invisible grace. We merely need to trust. (O'Donohue, 2008, p. 50)

Cultivating trust in one's self as a teacher in a political climate that extols observable and easily evaluated performance measures of success in the classroom is undoubtedly a place of contradiction between the self and the "other." However, this point of contradiction between a perceived sense of institutional distrust and a teacher's intuitive knowing that she is innately capable of knowing what to do when she doesn't know what to do (van Manen, 2015) has the potential to become a significant and empowering threshold of possibility to *be* present and *become* the teacher she desires and imagines herself to *be*.

Mindfulness is a practice that actively and intentionally cultivates trust in one's self. "In practicing mindfulness, you are practicing taking responsibility for being yourself and learning to listen and trust your own being. The more you cultivate trust in your own being, the easier you will find it will be to trust other people more and see their basic goodness as well" (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p. 37). A teacher's capacity to *be* fully present to notice and trust herself to enter into propitious moments where "[a]ll the energies cohere to offer a fecund occasion of initiative, creativity, and promise" (O'Donohue, 2007, p. 22) creates the conditions for her to *become* in-between the threshold of the Kairos moment. The phenomenological material in this study suggests

that that the process of *becoming* present, compassionate, kind, and responsive as a teacher is actualized in these in-between Kairos moments.

Barbara, an elementary school music teacher, writes about a moment when she trusted her intuition to guide her actions at the onset of a moment that was inherently unpredictable and emotionally provocative. In her Lived Experience Description (LED) (van Manen, 199), she describes a music lesson with a group of 5th graders where there was ongoing tension and issues between several of the students that, in her words, had "gotten ugly" in her class. Barbara writes about how she desired to create a lesson around music that opened up an opportunity for her students to focus their attention on racism and civil rights issues in a way that allowed students to honestly express themselves and connect with each other:

> Kind of heavy stuff for 5th graders, but after knowing them for the past several months, I knew that they have some really insightful views and many of them like to share and discuss. Our district has made it a practice of encouraging these 'courageous conversations' among staff and even when there is discomfort I always appreciate what I learn from them. Facilitating a discussion of this sort among my students however, is not something I knew how to approach. So I decided that I needed to focus on what I knew I could handle well: the music and the lyrics and then let the discussion grow from there.

What may easily escape one's attention and awareness if one did not slow this moment down and look closely would be Barbara's "pedagogical perceptiveness" that "relies in part on a kind of tacit or intuitive knowledge" (van Manen, 2015, p.81) that allows her to integrate several different forms of "knowing" that create the opportunity for her to enter into the Kairos moment. Van Manen (2015) remind us how as teachers, "our actions are always governed by certain intentionalities" (p. 81), and this appears to be true for Barbara in this moment. She desired and intended to open the space for courageous conversations about race to unfold in her classroom, and she was both excited for what it could become, while simultaneously feeling nervous and uncertain about not exactly knowing how to move through the moment. At the onset of a Kairos moment, feelings that contradict themselves like excitement, uncertainty, curiosity, and fear are to be expected. As we will explore through Barbara's lived experience, she is able to both

recognize and hold all her conflicting emotions and engage the moment in a confident and authentic way.

Image 3.2 Cliffs of Moher, Ireland

In this excerpt, Barbara courageously enters into the discomfort and uncertainty that always looms, like fog over the Cliffs of Moher, at the threshold into the Kairos moment. Surges of fear, uncertainty, and self-doubt are emotional energies that often accompany the opening of a Kairos moment that is, by its very nature, inherently unpredictable and uncontrollable (van Manen, 2015). Van Manen (2015) reminds us how "Kairos moments may yield insights and clarity, but are often brought on by pain, agony, and feelings of frustration and desperation" (p. 52). It appears that teachers who engage the practice of intentionally connecting with the energy of self-trust during the rush of emotions that tend to accompany moments of self-actualization and *becoming* in one's teaching enable themselves to center in their *being*-ness and bring one's self into alignment with the present moment. For Barbara, it may be read that as she connected with an awareness of what she knew well, the music and the lyrics, she aligned with a inner trust in her authority and capacity as a professional educator. Mindfulness training can assist in cultivating a capacity to trust one's self— especially in moments of teaching when conflicting emotions are evoked. "Developing a basic trust in yourself and your feelings is an integral part of meditation training. It is far better to trust your intuition and

your own authority, even if you make some 'mistakes' along the way, than always look outside yourself for guidance" (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p. 36).

O'Donohue (2007) encourages the crossing of thresholds of time (i.e., Kairos moments) with mindful awareness. "If we approach our decisive thresholds with reverence and attention, the crossing will bring us more that we could ever have hoped for" (p. 206). I contend that Barbara crosses a threshold into the Kairos moment she created in her teaching with self-awareness and attention. She clearly states her desires to create a space of connection with her students that allow them to engage critically important "courageous conversations" while also acknowledging that engaging courageous conversations was not something she felt she "knew" how to do. Yet she did it anyway. Moments when engaging a knowing-ness of what to do when one doesn't know what to do as a teacher has the potential to create an experience that can either exacerbate self-doubt and self-distrust or cultivate self-trust, connection to intuition, and authentic *being*-ness and embodiment.

For Barbara, standing at the threshold of engaging a lesson with her students that was new to her evoked nervous and uncertain energies, yet she was excited about the challenge. Barbara says:

> I was excited for this small part of my lesson that day and a little bit nervous that students may not take the subject matter seriously or be able to have a delicate discussion without hurting others' feelings.

I suggest that Barbara's increased self-awareness of her thoughts and emotions at the threshold of the Kairos moment allows her to accept the invitation into a new way of *being* in her teaching in the way the Celtic mind embraced living time— in a conscious way where there is "a continuous undertow of possibility always at work" (O'Donohue, 2007, p. 208). O'Donohue (2007) reminds us how living, and I suggest, teaching, like this "is to experience time as a constant invitation to growth—to become more than you have been, to transform loss into presence, and to allow what is false to fall away" (p. 208). Barbara said:

> I could feel myself gaining confidence as I listened to the lyrics with them. Although I had a general idea of where I wanted to guide the discussion, I had not prepared a list of questions—I knew I would have to listen to the kids' ideas and draw from their responses.

I suggest that in this phenomenological material Barbara appears to *be* trusting herself in this moment. She appears to *be* trusting her inner intuitive, emotional knowing-ness that fuels the positive energy rising as a felt-ness of confidence in herself. She describes feeling confident in knowing that she knew enough about where she wanted to go, but deliberately did not attempt to control it. She appears to know that if she is fully present and fully listening to their ideas, she knew she could handle whatever arose in that moment. Van Manen (2015) says that most human activities, like teaching, "involve tacit or intuitive complexities that constitute a kind of body knowledge or body skill" (p. 81) and that knowing what to do when you don't know what to do only ever happens in moments of uncertainty and risk. He says:

> Often knowing what to do occurs in the very act of doing it. It is as if we are touched by a genie, but only if we are open and sensitive to such a moment… The improvisational demands of teaching may be described as Kairos moments, when we must make use of the moment as it presents itself to us. (van Manen, 2015, p. 81)

Figure 3.3 Cliffs of Moher, Ireland

Like the dense fog clearing within 15 minutes of arriving at the Cliffs of Moher to reveal the remarkable beauty and brilliance of the landscape, I am reading Barbara's lived experience description as a moment when she consciously engages a positive and deliberate mindset and invites her to lean into the uncertainty of the moment with a deep

trust in herself, her students, and her capacity as a teacher. In doing so, the fog lifts, and she gains clarity and clear seeing in her teaching.

> The discussion that followed was amazing, inspiring, and humbling. I called on kids to share their ideas and was so impressed by the depths of their thoughts. A few of the kids who rarely participate surprised me in their desire to share. As I listened to them I was jotting notes about their observations on the white board and often times stopped to ask for a student to elaborate. For each student who shared, I made sure that I closed the distance between us, walked up close and made direct eye contact with them and thanked them for sharing, or told them that I liked how they described something. The energy in the room was very electric and positive and focused. There were no side conversations.

At the threshold of the Kairos moment that Barbara entered into with her students, she appears to embody what van Manen (1990, 1991, 2015) calls *pedagogical tact*. Pedagogical tact and thoughtfulness is an embodied sense of pedagogical "knowing" that is neither a science or a technology (van Manen, 1991). "Science and technology by their very nature cut knowledge off from experience by producing generalizations and technical principles that abstract from experience" (van Manen, 1991, p. 9). Pedagogical tact is that an embodied, intuitive knowing that leads to a way of *being* as a teacher that is guided by a "personal appropriation of moral intuition" (p. 9). Van Manen (1991) suggests that it is possible to learn the techniques of teaching, the content knowledge, and acquire an abundant instructional repertoire yet remain "pedagogically unfit as a teacher" (van Manen, 1991, p. 9). When van Manen refers to pedagogical tact, he is referring to that "thing" you can sense and feel when you see a tactful teacher in action but yet what that "thing" is remains elusive and impossible to wrap language around. "To become a teacher includes something that cannot be taught formally: the most personal embodiment of a pedagogical thoughtfulness" (van Manen, 1991, p. 9).

Pedagogical tact and thoughtfulness may be read as an embodied integration of the selfhood of the teacher when she trusts her intuition in the present moment, has the courage to engage the trust, and allows this invisible insight to guide her actions. For van Manen (2015), pedagogical tact:

> (1) manifests itself in everyday life as instant action; (2) forms a way of acting that is first of all dependent on an intuitive sensibility and sensitivity—in other words, a feeling—understanding; (3) is sensitive to the uniqueness of the child or young person; (4) is sensitive to the

> particularities and context of the situation; and (5) is unique also to the personal character of the teacher. (pp. 78-79)

"Pedagogical tact manifests itself primarily as a mindful orientation in our being and acting with children" (van Manen, 2015, p. 79). Using van Manen's (2015) five core features of pedagogical tact as a guide, I suggest that Barbara is displaying pedagogical tact in the aforementioned lived experience of a time she allowed her intuition to guide her actions by: (1) *being* present for the propitious moments in teaching (e.g., creating the space to have "courageous conversations" even when she believed she did not fully know how to engage them), (2) attuning her attention externally to read the emotions and energy of her students while also in-tuning into her own inner experience and emotions (e.g., paying conscious attention to her nervousness and excitement about the possibility and potential of the lesson and adjusting her engagement with student responses accordingly), (3) paying particularly close attention and sensitivity to what each child shared (e.g., closing the gap between herself and her students as she made direct eye contact to them as they spoke), (4) heightened awareness of the subtle tensions of the group of students from previous learning experiences (e.g., desiring to create a cohesiveness among the diverse group of students), and (5) *being* unique as a teacher through an embodiment of present moment awareness, open-mindedness, and a desire/ intention to create an opportunity of authentic teaching and learning.

The phenomenological material suggests that Barbara's *being*-ness at the Kairos moment produces her capacity to mindfully enter into and engage her desired *becoming* as a teacher. In a very profound way, in the moment she describes above, she integrated several different "pathic pedagogies" or forms of knowing to create an embodied way of *being* with her students that engaged that elusive pedagogical tact[13] that makes an impact. It is intentional thoughtfulness and reflective awareness on the part of the teacher in action.

> That particular day was one of—if not THE (emphasis original)—best class I have had with that group. Looking back on it, I really feel that my intuition was guiding me. I was feeling that our class cohesiveness was lacking and it was getting in the way of my teaching. I found that I was

[13] Tact is derived from the Latin word *tactus* that means to touch or keep something "intact"—untouched, uninjured—"to handle or feel something with the intent to appreciate or understand it in more than merely an intellectual manner" (van Manen, 2015, p. 103).

> grumpy and not looking forward to that group, and I was searching for a way to unify us. It was inspired teaching, but I didn't go into it knowing that outcome. I felt very clear, very calm, and confident. Somehow I could tell by the energy in the room that whatever was said it was going to be okay.

"Atmosphere is the way in which space is lived and experienced. But atmosphere is also the way a teacher is present to children and the way children are present to themselves and to the teacher" (van Manen, 2015, p. 129). Barbara appears to have transfigured a threshold of potential stress into a teachable moment of connection and possibility at the onset of engaging a lesson that she intuitively felt was necessary for her students even though she was uncertain about her capacity to engage it with authenticity and integrity. Through engaging a mindful orientation by *being* present, aware, and intentional with her desires for the type of learning opportunity *she desired* to create, she *becomes* a teacher who embodies her capacity within the uncertain moments of her teaching.

Barbara describes this 20-minute lesson as "THE best class" she had ever had with that group. She said she felt "excited and alert and laser focused on the kids' ideas."

> When I talked to the kids, it was not hollow praise, but genuine gratitude for their ideas, their sensitivity, and their humanity. The weight of the subject matter seemed inconsequential—we had moved to a bigger, deeper plane of understanding…. While guiding the discussion, I felt very clear, very calm, and confident.

Infinite Well-Being Integration Model

Exploring the phenomenological material has produced a visual representation that theorizes the inter-related nature of teacher *being*-ness and *becoming* and the way it is connected the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*. I am calling it the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*. A horizontal and vertical infinity loop intersect within the present moment to illustrated the contingent (i.e., in the moment) and recursive (i.e., occurring over and over again) interactive process where at teacher's *being*-ness at the onset of a Kairos moment invites her into integrating her intuition, wisdom, and present moment awareness in such a way that she *becomes* the teacher she desires to be.

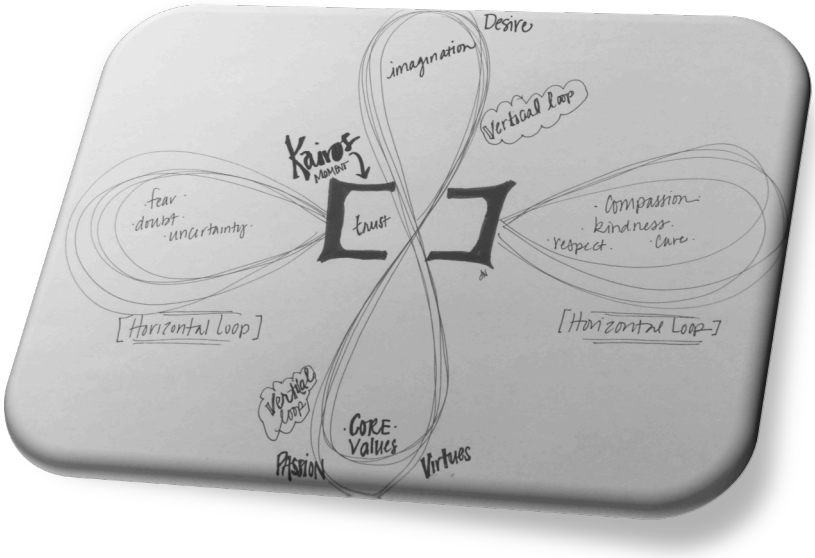

Figure 3.4 Infinite Well-Being Integration Model

As I interpret Barbara's lived experience description through this conceptual model, several elements appear to be swirling and interacting to create a moment in her teaching where Barbara appears to *be* present in such a way that she engages in *becoming* self-actualized (i.e., herself). First, Barbara was intentional about planning the learning experience she desired even though she felt uncertain about her capacities to facilitate the conversation in a productive way. Knowing what she desired to create, Barbara engaged a mindful orientation by witnessing and "being with" all the emotions that appeared to arise (e.g., fear, self-doubt, anxiety) at the onset of a lesson where uncertainty was present (e.g., left loop of the *Horizontal Infinity Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*).

I suggest that Barbara leans into self-trust at the threshold of this Kairos moment; knowing that she can trust her intuition to guide her to know what to do when she doesn't know what to do if she remains fully present and pays attention to what the students are saying. Barbara intentionally crossed the threshold into the Kairos moment, and as she does, I suggest that she syncs up with her core values and desired imagination of the type of teacher she wants to be in these types of teachable moments (e.g., *Vertical Infinity Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*). Invisibly, she is moving her energy in and around that Vertical Loop— *being* in the moment in a way that she appears to

express and embody her core values and purpose as a teacher. It may be interpreted that Barbara values *being* present, *being* encouraging, *being* receptive, *being* open, *being* accepting, and *being* kind.

Intuitive Integration

In this phenomenological study of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*, *intuitive integration* is theorized as a process of integrating one's inner knowing, intuition, and emotions in alignment with one's desired imagination of who one wants to *become* in the present moment of one's teaching. Attuning to her inner desires for what she wants to create in moments of uncertainty and risk coupled with an awareness of her emotions at the threshold of a Kairos moment appears to create the conditions for Barbara to *be* herself and *become* more than herself (i.e., displaying dispositions of respect, positive regard, and understanding) in her teaching.

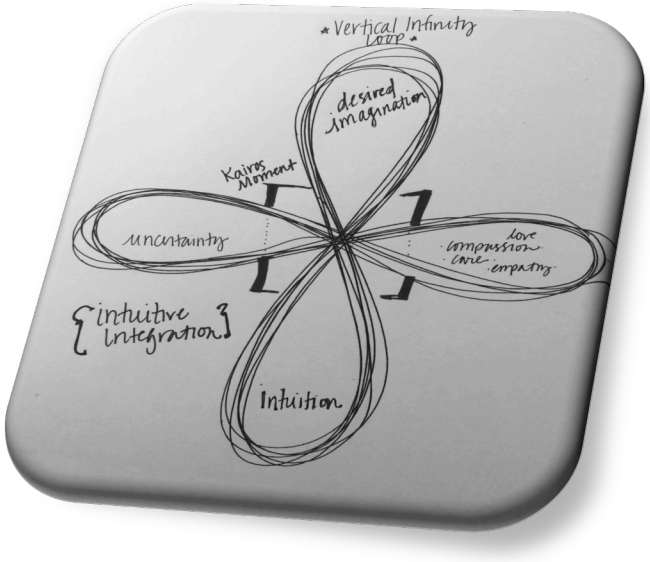

Figure 3.5 Vertical Infinity Loop- Integration of Intuition with Imagination

As I engage the phenomenological material, I become curious about the way connecting to one's non-rational intuitive knowing and trust in one's self in the middle of moments of teaching that are inherently uncertain may ground a teacher into herself and cultivate *teacher Presence*. Zinn's (2008) piece, Heading into the unknown: Everyday strategies for managing risk and uncertainty describes how entering into moments of uncertainty, which teachers arguably do on a daily basis (perhaps even moment by

moment) requires the engagement of three elements: rational knowing (e.g., weighing observable indicators or concrete calculations), non-rational knowing (e.g., belief, faith, and hope), and "in between strategies" of *trust, intuition, and emotion* that lie in-between our rational and non-rational knowing. For professionals who need to make "in the moment," reflexive decisions throughout the day without the luxury of time to accompany their actions, such decision making, Zinn (2008) discovered, calls for trust in the self and trust in one's intuition. "Similar to intuition, trust refers to tacit knowledge and pre-conscious awareness of reality. Intuition seems close to the kind of embodied (or even innate) knowledge high risk takers use" (Zinn, 2008, p. 439). I suggest that Barbara consciously relied on trusting her intuition in the uncertainty of a lesson that did not have a rigid or predictable structure. She also trusted herself when she recounts being aware of the fact that she was unable to control the course of the conversation, but that she could trust what she did know well— the music, the lyrics, and herself.

Trust. I suggest, given the phenomenological material, that trust is a necessary element in the cultivation of *teacher Presence.* I interpret trust as an invisible energetic connective tissue that allows the selfhood of the teacher to integrate within the moments of her teaching. In other words, trust in the self, especially during moments of uncertainty, serves as the connective tissue biding the teacher to herself and tethering her to the present moment. I use the analogy of trust as connective tissue between a teacher and the present moment, because as a yin yoga teacher, I am familiar with the way the connective tissue in the body functions to bind systems together and transmit energy.

Yin yoga is a practice that is based on the Taoist concept of balancing yin (passive) and yang (active) energy. Yin yoga is a passive form of yoga that invites individuals to transition out of a busy mind by settling their physical body in a specific posture, typically laying on the floor, to apply a slow load of stress to the connective tissue, tendons, and fascia of the body. For example, our joints, fascia, and connective tissue get rigid and tight if we do not strategically provide stress to keep them healthy and flexible. When the body is placed in strategic yin poses, the aim is to increase circulation and blood flow to the tissues in the body (e.g., hips, back, shoulders, knees, elbows, wrists, etc.) that allow us to move freely and fluidly.

I routinely integrate yin yoga into *Present Teacher*™ Training sessions, and as I guide teachers into different postures, I always remind them how critical it is to relax into the pose to receive the restorative energy and healing benefits. Yin yoga is an ideal physical practice that helps teachers to integrate the concept that low loads of stress on the body are both productive and essential in cultivating an overall state of well-being and vitality. During our yin yoga sessions, teachers also embody the felt-ness of *allowing* the stress to transform the body while they draw their attention to the physical sensations that arise and connect to their breath. The practice of feeling stress in the body, re-connecting with the breath as a tether to help them manage the strong sensations, and learning how to relax into the sensations not only cultivates physical strength in the connective tissue, it cultivates a stable mind amidst the discomfort.

The connective tissue, or fascia, in the body is a tissue that not only physically binds the body's vital organs and systems together, it translates energy through out the entire physiological system. "Because all the fascia is connected, what happens in one area of the body actually affects the fascia in all areas of the body" (Northrup, 2016, p. 137). The connective tissue is a communication system in and of itself. It constantly conveys and communicates energy through out the body to keep the physical system alive and functioning. When connective tissue is not stressed through strategic movements (like yin yoga), the tissue can become dense, scarred, and thickened. When there is dense fascia in the body, we can experience limited range of motion because the affected area "no longer enjoys the free flow of information, sensation, or blood supply" (Northrup, 2016, p. 138).

When I conceptualize the *Vertical Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*, I think of trust as an emotional "connective tissue" between one's self/soul and the present moment.

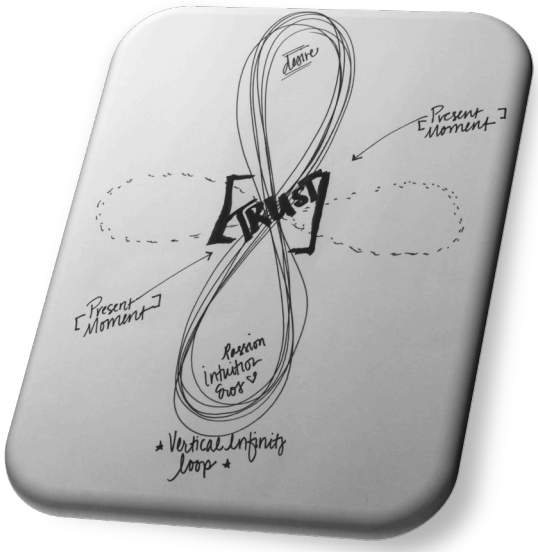

Figure 3.6 Vertical Infinity Loop

It is theorized that trust and faith are both energetic forces that may provide the "connective tissue" in the present moment that allows a teacher to connect with her inner energetic state of intuition, passion, and core values much like stressing the connective tissue in the body through yoga allows for the free flow of information, sensation, and blood supply. "Faith is an active force… an invisible power like love. It is not simply a belief in goodness, it is a belief put into action in the present moment" (p. 2) says Myss (2004) in her book, *Invisible Acts of Power.* "In the ancient Hindu belief system, faith also conveys protection, by giving us trust and confidence in the rightness of what we are doing. Faith enables us to have a positive attitude and hope even in the face of seemingly irreversible setbacks" (Myss, 2004, p. 2).

Returning to Barbara's lived experience description of a time she trusted her intuition and allowed it to guide her actions, it may be interpreted that she integrated the invisible process of trusting herself and her intuition (i.e., *intuitive integration*) at the onset of a Kairos moment. "Trust and intuition both involve feelings and emotions" (Zinn, 2008, p. 439), and Barbara speaks about this intuitive insight as a guide throughout her re-telling of this teachable moment:

> Looking back on it, I really *feel* that my intuition was *guiding* me. I was *feeling* that our class cohesiveness was lacking, and it was getting in the

way of my teaching. While *guiding* the discussion, I *felt* very clear, very calm, and confident.

Notice how Barbara connects her emotions with "being guided" into appropriate action in the moment. She says, "I could tell by the energy in the room that whatever was said was going to be okay." In this moment, Barbara's capacity and intention to read the energy in the room may be interpreted as trusting her intuitive perceptiveness. Dr. Myss (1997) defines intuition as just that— reading energy. Intuition is "learning to interpret the language of energy" (Myss, 1997, p. 33). In order for Barbara to *attune* to the energy in the room and *in-tune* into her own energetic state, she needs to *be fully present* in a way that allows her to feel and respond to the emotions that are evoked and provoked in that space. The phenomenological material suggests that as teachers tune into themselves in the present moments of their teaching, they access a part of themselves that transcends the busy mind, thus allowing them to come into direct contact with their feelings and the emotional energy of their students. As teachers attune to their student's emotional energy and in-tune into their own emotional states, it may be interpreted that they align with themselves in a way that gives rise to increase self-trust and self-confidence (i.e., traverse the *Vertical Loop of Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*).

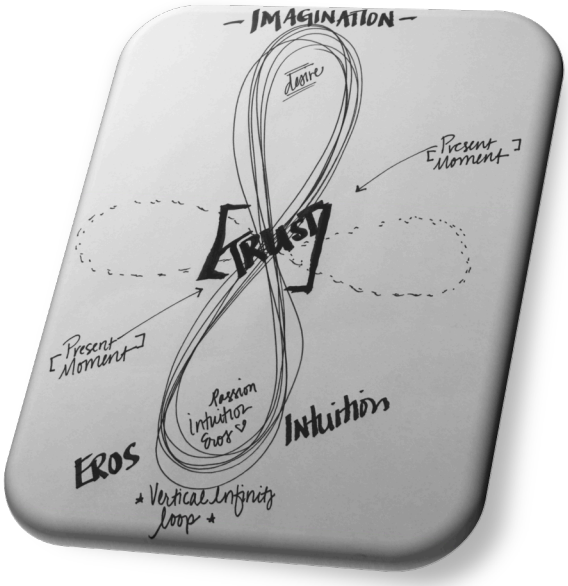

Figure 3.7 Vertical Loop of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*

Vertical Loop: Alignment with Intuition, Eros, and Imagination. The *Vertical Infinity Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model* visibly represents the invisible process of connecting with the self through trust in the midst of uncertain moments in one's professional practice. This model interprets moments of uncertainty, like Kairos moments, as opportunities to *become* present and connect to one's innate intuition and imagination of who one desires to *be* as a teacher.

The *Vertical Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model* visually represents a teacher cultivating self-esteem through deliberately directing her full attention onto and into herself. Myss (1997; 2004) says that everybody has access to their intuition and that accessing one's intuitive knowing is not a gift but a skill based on self-esteem. When we tap into our intuition we are reading the energy of everyone around us (Myss, 2004). Many teachers in this study described teaching using the language of energy. They described "good teaching" as times when they felt energetically engaged, hyper focused, joyful, and enthusiastic. When teachers felt conflicted in their teaching, they described the energy as being heavy, dense, and stagnant.

Teachers are energetic beings interacting and communicating with other energetic beings. How we manage and regulate our energy and our relationship to the energetic states of others is through our intuition. "Intuition is learning to interpret the language of energy" (Myss, 1997, p. 33). In the book, *Super Brain*, Tanzi and Chopra (2012) indicate how intuition is an integral part of the brain. Instinct and intuition, intellect, and emotions are always in constant neurological communication (Tanzi & Chopra, 2012). "The fact that humans are intuitive is uncontroversial. Whole areas of your life depend upon intuition—empathy for example. When you walk into a room, you can sense if the people in it are tense or have been fighting before you arrived—that's intuitive" (Tanzi & Chopra, 2012, p. 160). It appears, through the phenomenological material in this study, that trusting one's intuition allows one to integrate the emotional and intellectual knowing of the brain and body in such a way that guides responsive (as opposed to reactive) behavior in the present moment. Considering the lived experience evidence of teachers in this study, it becomes thinkable that if a teacher neglects trusting herself and her intuitive wisdom because she perceives herself to be untrustworthy as a professional, she may begin to disconnect from her very own self. As a teacher engages a cycle of

disconnection and self-distrust, she may unwittingly diminish her capacity to self-actualize and *become* the teacher she desires to *be* through the work that called her to the profession of teaching.

Myss (1997) says that maintaining a reflective or "meditative attitude facilitates your reception of intuitions" (p. 39), and Smalley and Winston (2010) report that "[w]hen you meditate or practice mindfulness, you have an opportunity to increase your intuitive awareness" (p. 129). Mindful awareness can allow for the cultivation of an open, nonjudgmental, and objective mind and state of *being*-ness that may increase one's capacity to quiet the mind and attune to subtle emotions and energy states in the body and in others. At times, intuition is referred to as "wisdom" in contemplative traditions and is often associated with a calm, open mind state. "Wisdom is contained within the beautiful feelings that come from the quiet of your mind…As you realize more deeply that wisdom is always here waiting to break through, you can trust in wisdom's responsive presence" (Bettinger & Swerdloff, 2016, pp. 68, 69).

Given the research, it appears that access to one's intuitive knowing-ness is always accessible. A teacher need not be a master meditator or have years of formal mindfulness training to gain access to her inner repository of energetic information, guidance, and wisdom. "Intuitive ability is present in everyone because it is a survival skill, not a spiritual intention… In developing your skill and trying it out in your own life, however, you *must* trust your gut responses—a fact I cannot emphasize enough," says Myss (1997). Myss makes a very explicit connection to trusting one's intuition and healthy self-esteem. She says, "I disappoint people when I discuss intuition because I firmly believe that intuitive or symbolic sight is not a gift but a skill—a skill based on self-esteem" (p. 33). Considering the conditions that cultivate the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*, it becomes apparent that trust in one's self is a critical component. Like Barbara illustrates through her lived experience description of a time she trusted her intuition and allowed it to guide her actions, trust in herself during a teachable moment that was filled with ambiguity, risk, and uncertainty empowered her to engage the moment in such a way that she brought her fully present self into her teaching practice.

- ∞ *Provocation #1: …Transfiguring institutional distrust and control may provoke threshold crossing into...*
- ∞ *Provocation #2: ... Kairos moments where a teacher may cultivate trust in her intuition and inner knowing which may provoke…*
- ∞ ***Provocation #3:…Becoming the teacher she desires to be through the act of dis-positioning herself.***

Cultivating Teacher Dispositions

> If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make the paper. The cloud is essential for the paper to exist. If the cloud is not here, the sheet of paper cannot be here either. So we say that the cloud and the paper inter-are. "Interbeing" is a word that is not in the dictionary yet, but if we combine the prefix "inter-" with the verb "to be," we have a new verb, so we can say that the cloud and the sheet of paper inter-are. (Hanh, 1988, p. 3)

Teachers and students are inextricably bound up in each other in the art, practice, and profession we call teaching. At its core, teaching, like all human service oriented work, is a relational profession, thus, as Hanh's (1988) concept of inter-being suggests, teachers and students "inter-are." The inter-actions a teacher has with her students especially in Kairos moments where uncertainty and ambiguity are inherent become the contingent (i.e., depending on context) invitations for her to move into herself where she "struggle[s] with the puzzles of public knowledge, think[s] them though, and explore[s] [her] authenticity and connections to [her] individual life" (Sockett, 2012, 35).

Courageously crossing the threshold into Kairos moments in one's teaching (as opposed to not engaging because of fear or self-doubt) may engage the dispositional process of *becoming* a teacher. The phenomenological material in this study suggests that when teachers engage the moments of their teaching where it is required of them to be intuitive, improvisational, and responsive, they gain experience in cultivating their dispositional capacities through exploring the "definitions of themselves, how they interact with other people, how they understand themselves publicly and privately, how they control their lives, how they learn, and how they act morally" (Sockett, 2012, p. 33). Through a post-intentional phenomenological engagement with the phenomenon in this

study, what gets produced or becomes thinkable is that a teacher's engagement in the inner process of *becoming* herself (i.e., traversing the *Vertical Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*) manifests, as a by-product, a *being*-ness in the present moment that allows for critical teacher dispositions like compassion, kindness, and reverence to be actualized and embodied within relationships with students.

For Barbara, her *being*-ness with the students in a way that embraces the uncertainty of their responses, the unpredictability of the flow of the conversation, and the unknown of what she will say and do in response to their thinking, feeling, and actions appears to enable her to transcend herself as she *becomes* understanding, present, curious, and respectful. In a way, her *being* present and connected with herself in the moment allows her to go beyond herself and channel dispositional ways of *being* with students (i.e., respectful, flexible, and attentive) that invite them to trust the learning space and Barbara.

States of *being*-ness in one's teaching are often referred to as teacher dispositions. Murrell et al. (2010) define teacher dispositions as "habits of professional action or moral commitments" that spur action, or seen as a teaching stance, "a way of orienting oneself to the work and responsibilities of teachers" (p. 9). The *Iowa Dispositions Model Framework*[14] delineates teacher dispositions through the following categories: *Caring, Communicative, Creative,* and *Critical.* I contend that in the Kairos moment she courageously entered into, Barbara manifested and embodied (i.e., engage in her *becoming-ness*) several dispositional traits within the *Iowa Dispositions Model Framework*. I suggest that she displayed respect and rapport (*Caring* dispositions), presence and responsiveness (*Communicative* dispositions), flexibility (*Creative* disposition), and open-mindedness and humility (*Critical* dispositions).

I interpret that through the Kairos moment that Barbara describes in her lived experience description that her state of present moment *being*-ness allowed her to *become* aligned with herself in a way that enabled her to dis-position (i.e., go beyond) herself to *become* present, attentive, kind, and curious toward her students. For example, Barbara shares how *being* present in the moment with her students allowed her to go beyond

[14] The *Iowa Dispositions Model* is referenced here because it is the model that is used in *Present Teacher* Training.

herself (and her aims or expectations for how she felt the lesson "should unfold") to truly *being* present for the students as they were:

> For each student who shared, I made sure that I closed the distance between us, walked up close and made direct eye contact with them, and thanked them for sharing, or told them that I liked how they described something. The energy in the room was very electric and positive and focused. A discussion that I thought would perhaps take 5-10 minutes lasted almost 20 and easily could have continued if I had not transitioned to another activity.

Barbara was intentional about "closing the distance" between the student and herself as she engaged deep listening. Mindful listening is a core element of the *Present Teacher*™ Training that Barbara received. Listening, as a mindfulness practice, is also a fundamental element of mindfulness meditation, because mindful listening commands one's full, nonjudgmental attention and awareness in the present moment.

In the book, *Radical Presence*, O'Reilley (1998) says that attention is critical to deep listening and receiving others while being truthful to ourselves:

> In academic culture most listening is critical listening. We tend to pay attention only long enough to develop a counterargument; we critique the student's or the colleague's ideas; we mentally grade and pigeonhole each other. In society at large, people often listen with an agenda, to sell or petition or seduce. Seldom is there a deep, openhearted, unjudging reception of the other. (p. 19)

Deep listening can be seen as a critical element of teacher dispositional actualization. Who a teacher is *being* and *becoming* is influence by her capacity to listen to her intuition (i.e., inner knowing), the present moment, and the students within those moments. Deep listening also invites teachers to listen to themselves in a reflective, compassionate way. Self-reflection is an important element in cultivating essential teacher dispositions like compassion, respect, and attentiveness. "[T]he teacher's stable dispositions and virtues are shaped and reshaped as reflection on new experiences as they are encountered" (Sockett, 2012, p. 51).

I contend that the Kairos moments of teaching provide the opportunities and invitations for teachers to continually actualize their dispositional capacities—their *becoming*— through a reflective listening of the self and another in the moment. Moments of reflection where teacher dispositions take shape and are cultivated need not

happen only during retrospective reflection where one is thinking back on past events or anticipatory reflection that focuses one's attention on future experiences (van Manen, 1991). When teachers become attentive in the moment to their inner experiences and in-tune to what they are feeling, intuiting, and thinking, they are practicing "contemporaneous reflection" (van Manen, 2015, p. 50). "Contemporaneous reflection in situations allows for a 'stop and think' kind of action… it is 'reflection' in the very moment of acting" (van Manen, 2015, p. 50; 1991, 1992). Schön (1983) says that "we can think about doing something but that we can think about something while doing it" (p. 54). In terms of cultivating teacher dispositions where one's dispositional capacities are shaped and reshaped in and through reflection, I suggest that a teacher's *being*-ness and *becoming* are intricately intertwined and interconnected in the present moment of one's professional practice. And that mindful awareness and conscious self-awareness in the present moment creates the space for a teacher to engage in contemporaneous reflection of the self that allows her to go beyond herself (i.e., dis-position herself) and embody compassion, attentiveness, acceptance, and care.

Barbara's lived experience description may be read as a contemporaneous moment where she was both *being* present and *becoming* herself (i.e., self-actualizing) through embodying dispositions of attentiveness, flexibility, and presence. It may be that engaging the Kairos moment with trust and self-awareness, Barbara created the space for both herself and her students to *be* and *become* themselves (i.e., self-actualize) through the shared moment of trust, intimacy, and authenticity. Trust is an energy; an energy of openness, connection, and flow. When we trust ourselves, we relax and open up to whatever presents itself. It may be inferred through the phenomenological material that when a teacher trusts herself, she infuses the *lived space* between herself and her students with an energy of calm, openness, and respect.

"Lived space is felt space" (van Manen, 1990, p. 102). Van Manen (1990) reminds us how difficult it is to put into words the lived experience of *lived space* since the experience of *lived space* is pre-verbal "yet we know that the space in which we find ourselves affects the way we feel" (p. 104). In her lived experience description of what is being read here as an engagement with a Kairos moment in her teaching, Barbara wraps

language around the elusiveness of the *lived space* she created between herself and her students:

> That particular day was one of—if not THE—best classes I have had with that group. Looking back on it, I really feel that my intuition was guiding me. I was feeling that our class cohesiveness was lacking, and it was getting in the way of my teaching. I found that I was grumpy and not looking forward to seeing that group and was searching for a way to unify us....It was inspired teaching, but I didn't go into it knowing the outcome… Somehow I could tell by the energy in the room that whatever was said was going to be ok. I didn't worry about how I would handle comments that may have been inappropriate, rude, or callous….Once I started really listening to the kids and showing them that THEIR (emphasis original) ideas were the launching pad for our success everything seemed so easy. I felt excited and alert and laser focused on the kids' ideas. When I talked to the kids it was not in hollow praise, but genuine gratitude for their ideas, their sensitivity, their humanity. The weight of the subject matter seemed inconsequential—we had moved to a bigger, deeper plane of understanding.

Given this exploration of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*, I suggest that teachers practice tuning in to their emotional, physical, and mental bodies in moments when we they feel uncertain in teaching. In fact, these moments of uncertainty may be the most productive moments one's practice in regards to cultivating *teacher Presence*. I go so far as to assert that if a teacher self-abnegates through distrusting herself in moments of uncertainty that she unconsciously perpetuates a destructive cycle of dis-embodiment and dis-integration of her selfhood. As consequence, it becomes thinkable that "the classroom become[s] routinized by standards of disembodied expectations removed from the organic responses of student bodies, while teachers conduct themselves 'professionally' in ways that distance them from the possibility of expressing authentic human love" (Darder, 2017, p. 83).

Teacher *Becoming*

"The human person comes into being and is formed through recognition of what lies outside of ourselves and through being seeing by someone or something (van Manen, 2015, p. 141). Based on the phenomenological material in this study, when a teacher is present in Kairos time or the "NOW moment" (van Manen, 2015)— that "transformative moment of change depending on our ability and willingness to seize the opportunity that is offered within it" (Murchadha, 2013 as cited in van Manen, 2015, p. 52)— she

empowers herself to come into *being* through attunement with her students and in-tune-ment into her own internal world. In this way, a teacher's *being*-ness, or embodiment of her authentic self, and her *becoming*-ness appear to be entangled with and through her relationships with her students. In this way, she may in fact come to see herself through how she sees her students. This is a powerful act of self and another recognition and reverence. For Saevi (2015), "[t]he notion of being regarded and being recognized can give us rich insights into the complex and subtle phenomenon of becoming and learning, especially in present-day contexts in which learning is sometimes narrowly identified with cognitive gain and measurable outcomes (as cited in van Manen, 2015).

Teacher *becoming* appears to be a contingent and recursive process in perpetual unfoldment in the present moment through one's *being*-ness in relationship with the self and one's students. Given this line of thinking, it is important to remember that there will always be dimensions of the self we never see; parts of ourselves that elude our knowing. "No one ever achieves a full, direct view of himself, the merest glimpse is as swift as a thought. Yet this glimpse grounds everything about your life and illuminates your work, friendship, destiny, and identity" (O'Donohue, 2004, p. 186).

It appears that through a teacher's inter-actions with students within the Kairos moments that present themselves, she is invited to engage in the process of her own *becoming* through *being* unknown to herself. Much like the uncertainty and risk that swirls and swells at the threshold of Kairos moments where great "complexity of emotion comes alive: confusion, fear, excitement, sadness, hope" (O'Donohue, 2007, p. 65), it is wise to deeply connect with and in-tune to the self. Deep listening is required. O'Donohue (2007) says that it is "wise in your own life to be able to recognize and acknowledge the key thresholds: to take your time, to feel all the varieties of presences that accrue there, to listen inwards with complete attention until you hear the inner voice calling you forward" (p. 65), because when a great moment of *being* and *becoming* knocks on your door, and there are many moments like these embedded in every single day of one's teaching practice, "it sounds no louder than the beat of your heart and it is very easy to miss" (O'Donohue, 2007, p. 22).

Conclusion

Through the integration of the phenomenological material in this study, it asserted that a teacher cultivates *teacher Presence* through Kairos moments that evoke her authentic *being*-ness and entangle who she is *becoming* through dis-positioning herself through her relationships with her students. When a teacher meets moments of uncertainty (e.g., left loop of the *Horizontal Infinity Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*) through grounding down into herself through intuitive integration where she acknowledges her emotions, evokes her values, and embodies her desired imagination of who she wants to *become* (e.g., *Vertical Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*), it is theorized that she transcends herself through the embodiment of "dis-positions" like compassion, acceptance, presence, and attentiveness.

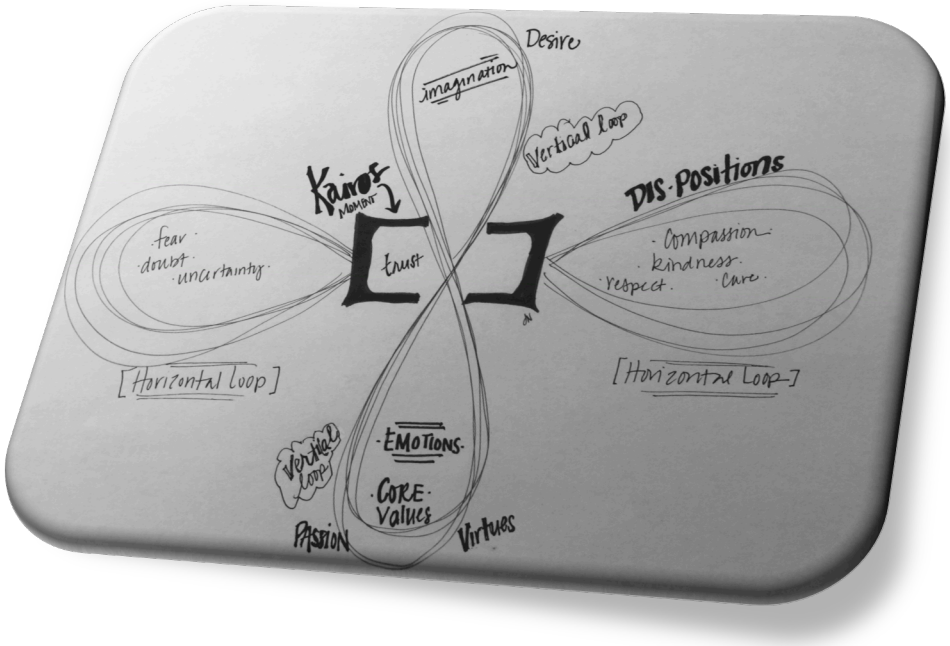

Figure 3.8 Infinite Well-Being Integration Model

This body of research suggests that when a teacher shows up in her teaching deeply connected to herself through the present moment, she is able to meet students *as they are* from a powerful place of *knowing who she is*. As the phenomenological material suggests, when teachers disconnect from their own sense of self and trust in their intuition and inner wisdom, they may *become* dis-embodied "others" that perceive their

students as objects or dis-embodied things to be controlled. This felt sense of separateness or disconnection of the mind and body may serve to disconnect teachers from having authentic connections with students— connections that create the conditions for her to both *be* and *become* the teacher she desire to be. O'Donohue (1999) reminds us:

> There are no manuals for the construction of the individual you would like to become. You are the only one who can decide this and take up the lifetime of work that it demands.... If you can find a creative harmony between your soul and your life, you will have found something infinitely precious. You may not be able to do much about the great problems of the world or to change the situation you are in, but if you can awaken the eternal beauty and light of your soul, you will bring light wherever you go. The gift of life is given to us for ourselves and also to bring peace, courage, and compassion to others. (p. 102)

In conclusion, it is important in human development work like teaching to remember that "[h]uman presence is never neutral. It always has an effect" (O'Donohue, 1999, pp. 58-59). One's *presence* is always either evoking a connection with another or repelling it. *Teacher Presence,* as it is explored in post-intentional phenomenological study, may be read as an embodiment of one's triumvirate *being*-ness—the union of body, spirit, and all that lies within, in, and through the present moments of one's teaching practice with one's students.

Teacher Presence may be a quality of *being*-ness that other human beings, especially students, long to connect with. "The human body longs for presence…When a thing is closed, we only encounter its outer shell… Nowhere else in the world are you encountered and engaged as totally as by a human person" (O'Donohue, 1999, p. 59). Perhaps the contingent (i.e., in the moment) and recursive (i.e., perpetually cycling in and through the loops of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*) process of *becoming* the type of teacher one desires to *be* (e.g., compassionate, kind, and caring) leaves an indelible mark a teacher's *being-ness* in such a way that in self-actualizing in the Kairos moments of teaching, she *becomes* more than who she was the moment before; she expands. It becomes thinkable that this moment-by-moment expansion of self is a core feature of the process of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*, and that every moment she transfigures distrust, uncertainty, and risk in her teaching and in-tunes

to herself, her intuition, and her desires and trusts herself, taking action in alignment with her inner knowing, she *becomes* both herself *and* more than herself in those moments. I contend that in every act of expanding into and beyond herself, she perceives the *being*-ness of her students with more expansive "in-sight" that further fuels and feeds her spirit as confirmation that she is engaging her core values and purpose in her heart centered calling.

PAPER FOUR

THE MACRO-MIRACLE MOMENT

Introduction

FIRE

What makes a fire burn
is the space between the logs,
a breathing space.
Too much of a good thing,
too many logs
packed in too tight
can douse the flames
almost as surely
as a pail of water would.

So building fires
requires attention
to the spaces in between,
as much as to the wood.

When we are able to build
open spaces
in the same way
we have learned
to pile on the logs,
then we can come to see how
it is fuel, and absence of the fuel
together, that makes fire possible.

We only need to lay a log
lightly from time to time.
A fire
grows
simply because the space is there,
with openings
in which the flame
that knows just how it wants to burn
can find its way.

Fire by Judy Brown, from the book, *Leading from Within* (Intrator & Scribner, 2009)

Parker Palmer (1997) claims that "[w]hat we teach will never 'take' unless it connects with the inward, living core of our students' lives, with our students' inward teachers" (p. 20). As I engage teachers through *Present Teacher* Trainings and

professional developments sessions, this quote influences how I teach. The very first moment of every *Present Teacher* Training session with a new group of educators begins the same; with me reading aloud the *Fire* poem. I am a reading teacher at heart, and I believe that poetry can convey the invisible felt-ness of human experiences in a way that invites the listener to pay attention to their emotional and visceral responses. "Poetry has a way of slipping past ego and intellect to speak directly to the heart about matters of great moment… Poetry has forever helped us remember what it means to be human." (Intrator & Scribner, 2003, p. xix). I believe poetry creates a mental and emotional spacious in the reader/listener, because it invites one to pay close attention to the meaning behind the words. And, as a reading teacher, I also believe that no one ever outgrows the pleasure of being read to, especially time-starved teachers. I always encourage them to sit back, close their eyes, and allow the words of the poem to "wash over and through them."

It was the first session of a 9 month long *Present Teacher* Training series with a cohort of suburban elementary teachers. We had gathered after school in the school's media center. The beauty of bringing mindfulness training for educators "in house" at their school site is that they tend to be immediately comfortable engaging, because they are surround by their peers in a familiar space. I have discovered how quickly teachers in this familiar space get real about the stress of teaching.

After I had read aloud the *Fire* poem, I invited teacher to open their eyes. I asked them to reflect on the feelings that poem evoked. I also asked them to share with a partner insights they took away. A third grade teacher, one who I know well because my daughter was a student in her classroom said, "I feel like logs are being hurled at my head!! And I feel like with all the logs and stuff I have to 'do' every day, I could literally not teach a single child and still not be done with my daily check list." There was brief moment when everyone in the space sat silently after this teacher shared her insight. That silence was broken by the sound of clapping starting to spread around the room. I simply responded by saying, "Well, we better learn how to duck!"

John Kabat-Zinn once said at an all day mindfulness meditation retreat something that has stuck with me and greatly influenced the way I create experiences for teachers to engage in the work we call mindfulness. He said, "This is all too serious to take seriously" (personal communication, 2016). There is no question this is serious. Teacher

stress is series. Burnout is serious. The mental, emotional, physical, and soul health of our most precious resource in the profession of teaching, the health and well-being of personhood of the teacher, is serious. I would even go so far as to say it is critical. The headline for the April 2018 Mindfulness Magazine reads, *the medicine of the moment—is mindfulness the future of health care?* It was cited that "many experts see mindfulness meditation as a powerful antidote to burnout, which has become a serious crisis in the health care profession" (p. 56). Burnout *is* a crisis in human service oriented professions. Those called to serve in the helping and healing professions are most at risk for developing soul/spiritual "heart dis-ease." When human service professionals lose heart and disconnect from the fire that called them to help and heal, the result can be seen a serious psychological, mental, emotional, and spiritual "dis-ease" that affects their entire personhood and well-*being*-ness.

The Crisis of Human Service Professional Burnout

Vandenberghe and Huberman (1999) describe the "crisis" that characterizes burnout as:

> A stressful, continuous process of change in the person that is characterized by destabilization of psychic action, regulation, or organization and destabilization in emotional sphere shown by severe mood changes, doubts, and disappointments. (p. 55)

Unchecked and accumulated stress in one's professional life can reach a destructive tipping point where what innocuously begins as an "occupational identity crisis" generalizes to the entire self-concept of the human service professional (Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999). Why? Because many called to human service work believe the are engaging a calling or vocation. One's work as a teacher, nurse, physician, social worker, and the like is deeply interconnected to the heart, soul, and personhood of the professional.

Those called to human service professions describe being animated by love, passion, and compassion to help and heal other human beings and may claim to feel "summoned" by their calling. Being a professional educator for over two decades, and in my work with many different teachers through *Present Teacher*™ Training, countless teachers I have worked with believe that the work chose them. Some have even said they

tried to avoid the call to teach once having heard it, yet found themselves in the classroom even after trying to suppress the voice in their hearts. Evidently, as teachers:

> We don't come to teaching to punch the clock or count the dollars. Most of us come to teaching to answer a summons or bidding that commands us to do this work. We are drawn to teaching by our passion for our students and love of our subjects… we are drawn by a sense that we can make a different in a child's life, in our world, and that engaging in such meaningful work will be cause for great personal fulfillment. (Intrator & Scribner, 2003, p. 1)

It appears that for teachers, nurses, therapists, physicians (to name just a few), a passionate desire to be of service fuels their vocational purpose. Garrison (1985) refers to this passionate desire as "Eros:"

> We become what we love…. That is why the Greeks made the education of *eros*, or passionate desire, the supreme aim of education. Good teachers passionately desire the good for their students. (pp. xiii, xiv)

Palmer (1997) describes teaching as a human activity that emerges from one's interiority. "Teaching, like any human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or for worse. As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together" (Palmer, 1997, p. 15). Human service oriented work is intimately interconnected to the humanness of the professional performing the role.

> The world can give you a job, and a job can be taken away. But a true calling puts you in a career zone that cannot be taken away. It reflects your willingness to do what you feel inwardly lead to do in order to help heal the world. (Williamson, 2013, p. 120)

It appears that for teachers, their professional lives are personal; for better or for worse. And the "for worse" can be conceptualized as an insidious "heart dis-ease" that affects their entire *being*-ness. It is a *dis-ease* of the heart when the love, passion, eros, and desire that called them to their professional purpose turns toxic and serves to dis-integrate their self-hood from the inside out. It is as if the passionate Eros and desire energy that is the primary source and fuel to burn brightly in their vocation, becomes the very fire and flame that burns them out. This body of work originated from a similar calling, by an unrelenting passion and desire to be of service to teachers and to the profession of teaching. Much like teachers report that the "summons to teach was not a choice but the best way to use their gifts," (Intrator & Scribner, 2003, p. 1) as the

researcher, I, too, believe that this work has chosen me so that my gifts can be leveraged. I have discovered through this study and my doctoral work how my own experiential body of knowing-ness of burnout, stress, mindfulness, and well-being the greatest gifts I can offer and the best way I can be of service.

Burnout has reached epidemic proportions in human development/ service oriented work. Three primary sources of stress that exacerbate the crisis of burnout are: (1) organizational/ systematic/ institutional stress, (2) "role" stress, and (3) the capacity of the individual's internal resources to cope with the external stressors. Organizational/ institutional stress is typically experienced as a chronic sense of busyness coupled with a feeling of being controlled, manipulated, and confined by increased bureaucratic evaluation and performance measures. Teachers and health care professionals cite strikingly similar tensions to the increasing "top down" demands they feel subject to on a daily basis. "Top down" demands on time, performance, and productivity become stressful because they appear to create a perceived loss of professional autonomy in one's practice. Teachers in this study cite feeling a loss of control over what they teach and how they teach to be inherently stressful. A tension is experienced between what they feel they need to teach to serve the interests and needs of their students and what they are told they must teach and the timeframe they must teach it in.

Stress that exacerbates a disconnect from the self appears as a by-product when one perceives their core values or professional purposes as perpetually mis-aligned with the demands of the job. The teacher cited at the beginning of this paper, who felt as if logs were being hurled at her head, illustrates how one's professional values (e.g., connections with students) can be mis-aligned with the daily demands on her time. If a teacher feels external forces are dictating what she must do in her professional space, and these demands consistently contradict her core values as a teacher, stress is experienced.

Other human service professionals like physicians and nurses appear to feel the pressure of top down bureaucratic control as well. Research indicates that there is a "substantial decline in physicians' autonomy because of increased managerial and cost control by governments, employers, and patients" (Wallace, Lemaire, & Ghali, 2009, p. 1715; Dunstone, 2001; Landon, Reschovsky, & Blumenthal, 2001; Gross, Tabenkin, & Brammli-Greenberg, 2007). Nursing research on burnout has identified "heavy work

loads, feelings of powerlessness, management styles, and ill-designed jobs and work environments" (Burke & Greenglass, 2001; Hersch et al., 2016; Laschinger et al., 2001; Ruggiero, 2003; Upenieks, 2003; Cohen-Katz et al., 2005) as organizational threats to their psychosocial well-being. Dawson (1989) illuminates nurses' struggle for autonomy in making professional decisions as source of stress: "their traditionally subservient status in the health-care system often robs them of the authority to make even simple decisions and earn respect" (p. A7). Teachers, like nurses, may feel a significant loss of personal autonomy and professional agency because of excessive class size, loss of autonomy, loss of control over decisions about curriculum, conflict between school policy and one's professional beliefs, role ambiguity and conflict, classroom climate, poor working conditions, sense of isolation, low salary, and increased high stakes testing (Curry & O'Brien, 2012; Hawkins Eskridge & Coker, 1985; Kyriacou, 2001; Larrivee, 2012; Vandenerghe & Hubberman, 1999).

Over the past two decades, human service oriented work in the Western world has become strongly influenced by neoliberal ideals that have transformed the nature of one's professional duties and what it means to "*be*" a teacher or health care professional due to increased bureaucratic control and trends toward universal standards and increased standardization and accountability measures (Alerby & Brown, 2013; Dillabough, 1999; Hargreaves, 2001; Mockler, 2011). Barbara, a veteran teacher of over 20 years reflected in one of our interviews on how de-humanizing the teaching profession felt after she returned from taking six years off to raise her children. "When I came back to teaching, the environment felt more institutionalized. It seemed like we were following a business model. We had a mission statement and binder of protocols you were expected to follow. All the things that were humanizing about the profession had been stripped away when I came back."

In *The Phenomenology of Teacher Work: Images of Control, Chaos and Care,* Alerby and Brown (2013) illuminate, phenomenologically, how teaching in the 21st century is felt and experienced in light of current policy and increased standardization. Teachers in the study cited how when talking about the nature of their work, that the emotional and pathic dimensions (e.g., empathy, compassion, care) are marginalized or silenced through rigid and controlling educational policies and standards (Alerby &

Brown, 2013; Hargreaves, 1994; O'Conner, 2008). The three themes that Alerby and Brown (2013) bring to light about the experience of teacher work are: "*To control and be controlled, to manage or enjoy chaos, and to care, nurture, and protect"* (p. 225). Their study demonstrates how "lived bodily experience" of *being* a teacher feels "small and lonely in relation to the demands of external factors and the environment, when being controlled" (p. 230). They discovered that "lived bodily experience" of chaos for teachers was:

> often linked to demands of control and assessment that teachers are obliged to carry out. As a result the lived body becomes vanishingly tiny, losing control in the chaos of the demands of administrative tasks. The body is so reduced and powerless that it is not possible to do anything about the chaos…. the lived time is endless, full of never-ending tasks. (Alerby & Brown, 2013, p. 230)

Technocratic rationalist assumptions that privilege performative measures of practice that are easily quantifiable and measurable in policy and standards "change not only what teachers do but who they are" (p. 223). A felt sense that teaching is "endless, full of never-ending tasks" is not isolatable to educational professionals. "Today's healthcare systems are pervaded by busyness and influenced by values that are measurable and reflect effectiveness," says Dreyer et al. (2018, p. 33). Shanafelt (2009) cite "loss of autonomy, decreased control over the practice environment, and the inefficient use of time due to administrative requirements to be central factors" (p. 1338) contributing to physician and nurse burnout.

In addition to the felt lack of professional control teachers cite as causing a significant amount of stress, a second significant source is "role stress." Role stress in human service work is typically viewed as the by-product of a disparity between the *reality* of the role and the *aspirations* or *expectations* of the individual within the role (Chang et al., 2005; Lambert& Lambert, 2001; Leiter, 1991). Often times the "professional mystique" of the profession clashes with the daily demands of being a teacher, nurse, or physician. This is often experienced as psychological/mental stress in that one's thoughts about the role tend to come into conflict with the reality of the role. In *Present Teacher* Training sessions, specifically the session where we discuss the origins of teacher stress and explore the expectation of the role, we talk explicitly about the "hero

teacher myth." The hero teacher myth is a socially and culturally constructed image or assumed ideological myth often perpetuated by Hollywood movies and social norms that glamorize a typically white, female teacher as a savior, especially when she is positioned in working in classrooms with "underprivileged" children. The work of human service professionals as conveyed through television shows and movies can implicitly inculcate false beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions about the role of human service oriented work. When a teacher experiences a discrepancy between her expectations of what she assumes the role of teaching to be with the realities of what the role of teaching is, she may experience debilitating bouts of disillusionment and disenchantment.

Another example of enculturation that occurs for teachers can be ascribed to Lortie's (1975) concept of the apprentice of observation. Unlike other professions, according to Lortie (1975), teachers have spent about 13,000 hours in direct contact with teachers by the time they graduate from high school (p. 61). Lortie (1975) suggests that many teachers learn, through the apprenticeship of observation, generalized notions of what "good" and "bad" teaching looks like. "In the organizational context of public human service work new professionals find themselves engaged in a conflict between their assumptions regarding a professional role and the realities of the workplace" (Leiter, 1991, p. 548). Disparity between one's expectations, desires, and assumptions can create mental, emotional, and spiritual[15] tension and stress. In the research on the attitudinal phases of first year teacher development by Moir (1990), the impact of "role" stress begins to manifest itself in the mental and emotional body of the teacher within the first two months of teaching. Moir (1990) describes the disillusionment phase occurring about 6-8 weeks into one's academic year when the realities of what a teacher desires to do and accomplish is unable to be realized. When disillusioned, teachers begin to question their commitment to their work. In addition, Moir (1990) notes that during this attitudinal phase, physical illness manifests due to the emotional, situational, and mental stress of role conflict.

Another influential "role" stressor of human service work is the inherent nature of emotional labor (Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2008; Larrivee, 2012; Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs,

[15] Spiritual in this body of work signifies a connection to one's self and sense of truth and authenticity. It is not intended to signify any religious connotation or espouse any one (or more) religious affiliation(s).

2011). Often times, the emotional investment required in professions like teaching and nursing is one of the greatest sources of stress and burnout. For health care professionals, emotional stress tends to manifest in and through highly "emotionally-charged situations, associated with suffering, fear, failure, and death… and will often culminate in difficult interactions with patients, families, and other medical personnel" (Wallace, Lemaire, & Ghali, 2009, p. 1715; Arnetz, 2001; McMurray et al., 1997). According to the educational research, emotional stress significantly arises in the area of interpersonal relationships with students that are contentious (Blasé, 1986; Eskridge & Coker, 1985; Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011; Vandenerghe & Hubberman, 1999). The relationships teachers have with students can either be a great source of joy and inspiration or a great source of stress and emotional fatigue (Eskridge & Coker, 1985; Larrivee, 2012; Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011). While being emotionally evocative work, emotions can also be a great source of rejuvenation, hope, as well. Emotional stress due to antagonistic relationships with students is cited as one of the primary reasons teachers flee the profession with nearly half of new teachers leaving the profession within their first five years of teaching (Larrivee, 2012, pg. vii).

Blasé (1986) identifies student discipline to be the largest category of student-generated stressors for teachers, and that student misbehavior appeared to be the most stressful when it directly or indirectly interfered with classroom instruction. The raw data in Blasé's Qualitative Analysis of Sources of Teacher Stress (1986) indicated the following:

> Teacher stress resulting from discipline was often associated with being forced to play roles (e.g., 'babysitter,' 'heavies,' 'police,' and 'harsh authoritarian'), which teachers found inherently distasteful and 'incongruent with the kind of atmosphere' they believed was essential to effective teaching and learning. (p. 18)

Correlational research suggests that teachers also experience stress when teacher-student relationships are characterized as distant or disrespectful (Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011). Contentious teacher-student relationships have been researched for their negative impact on student learning, yet not much is known about the ways relationships with students characterized by conflict and mistrust contribute to teacher burnout (Spilt, Kooman, & Thijs, 2011). When teachers experience stress from aspects of their job related to

interpersonal relationships, they behave differently towards their students by becoming less tolerant, less patient, less caring, and overall, less involved (Blasé, 1996). Teachers value the relationships they have with their students, and it is widely believed that relationships with students provide teachers with internal rewards that tether them to the profession. Again, many teachers feel "called" to teaching to help, teach, and be a positive influence on their students. When these relationships break down, it appears to not only impact a teacher's effectiveness, it appears to impact them on a mental, emotional, and spiritual level.

Another debilitating "role stressor" in human service work directly related to emotional stress and exhaustion is compassion fatigue. Individuals called to heal and help others are put on the front lines of witnessing significant human suffering, trauma, and pain (emotional, mental, and/or physical). Human service oriented work is emotional labor because responding to the suffering of another and being agential in another's healing process requires the professional to exert profound amounts of emotional energy toward another human being. Schools, hospitals, and other care facilities are often described as "emotionally draining" workplaces (Rabb, 2014), because they require the professional to feel for, with, and/ or alongside another. Empathy and compassion are critical dispositions and emotional investments made in the teaching and healing professions on a daily, if not, moment-to-moment, basis. Over time, the depth of feeling required of professionals in educational and health care spaces can become depleting to the practitioner.

Compassion means "to suffer with" another human being (Rabb, 2014; McNeill, Morrison, & Nouwen, 1982). Webster's dictionary defines compassion as a "feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by suffering or misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the pain or remove its cause" (1996, p. 416). Compassion is a necessary and primary emotional capacity of any human service professional. This disposition allows teachers, nurses, and physicians to do their work effectively, because their capacity to feel for another allows them to put themselves in the student's, client's, or patient's shoes. It "enables [them] to calibrate [their] services to fit them and adjust [their] services to fit how they are proceeding" (Figley, 2002, p. 1434).

Empathy, another critical disposition of the human service professional, refers to the extent to which one makes an effort to reduce the suffering of another through empathic understanding. Empathy is related to understanding a person's thoughts and feelings from *their* point of view, not from one's own. Webster's Dictionary defines empathy as "the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of another" (1996). Empathy and compassion are energetic sources of connection as one attunes to the emotional energy of another. Compassion fatigue or "compassion stress" can be described as the residual emotional energy experienced from an empathic or compassionate interaction with another human being that lingers long after the event (Figley, 2002). The continual emotional investment called upon teachers, nurses, and physicians to make in their everyday line of work can quickly cascade into intense emotional burnout, often cited as the "cost of caring" (Figley, 2002), if they are not equipped with capacities to rejuvenate and recover from their emotional expenditures.

Compassion fatigue is a by-product effect of seeing the world from the perspective of another who is suffering, and as a result of feeling this suffering, one suffers, too (Figley, 2002). In the research, compassion fatigue is seen as a form of "secondary traumatic stress" where the caregiver over-identifies with the pain and suffering of the client, student, or patient. "Compassion fatigue is defined as a state of tension and preoccupation with the traumatized patients by re-experiencing the traumatic events..." (Figley, 2002, p. 1435). The double-edged sword is that the human service professionals most susceptible to experiencing compassion fatigue are those who are most compassionate and caring. It is important to recognize that the most involved, devoted, caring, compassionate, and conscientious humans called to human service work, who have a high emotional, spiritual, and value-based investment in their patients/ students, are the ones who, paradoxically, are the most at risk for burning out through compassion fatigue and the stressors of the role (Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1991).

Another source of relational-stress of human service oriented work is the intrapersonal relationship one has with one's self (Eskridge & Coker, 1985; Larrivee, 2012; Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011). External stress can be compounded when one believes they are ill-equipped to manage their emotional response to the stress (Larrivee,

2012). “Emotional stress and poor emotional management consistently rank as the primary reasons teachers become dissatisfied and leave teaching” (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005, as cited in Larrivee, 2012, p. 51). How an individual relates to her environment and her assessment of her capacity to cope with the stress will determine the level of stress she internalizes as well as influence her propensity to burning out (Eskridge & Coker, 1985).

Mindfulness-based interventions have been used to systematically increase self-awareness, emotional regulation, reduce stress, and hone the mind’s cognitive abilities to increase an individual’s internal coping skills. Current research in the realm of stress reduction and teacher well-being suggest that “mindfulness is a useful intervention to address a variety of psychological problems…” (Gold et al., 2009, p. 184). Mindfulness is the practice “paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, nonjudgmentally” (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4). Practicing mindfulness allows one to become aware of thoughts and sensations as “events” that flow through consciousness; events that can be observed and noticed without reaction or judgment (Franco et al., 2010). Mindfulness allows one the opportunity to slow down and pay attention to the present moment. Tan (2012) reminds us of the fleeting nature of mindfulness, but that it is something that everyone can strengthen with practice.

Three Manifestations of Burnout. Exposure to chronic stressors has a cascading effect on a teacher’s mental, emotional, and spiritual health that often produce visible manifestations in the classroom setting. Burnout is not instantaneous; it’s a process of a slow dis-integration of the self-hood of the practitioner that occurs over time, and it reveals itself as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment (Halsbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Larrivee, 2012; Maslach, 2003).

The three key dimensions and manifestations of burnout are (1) emotional exhaustion, (2) feelings of cynicism, detachment, or depersonalization, and (3) a sense of ineffectiveness or diminished self-efficacy (Maslach & Jackson, 1982; Maslach, 1996; 1998; 2001; 2003). Emotional exhaustion is characterized as a feeling of emotional depletion where on feels they can give no more of themselves on a psychological, emotional, or mental level (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Maslach & Jackson, 1982; Maslach, 1996; 1998; 2001; 2003). Fraad (2000) explains: “Trying to understand and

empathize with another's psychological needs and to satisfy those needs requires full awareness and the strain of focusing one's senses, intellect, and musculature toward another" (p. 72). In the book, *Toiling in the Field of Emotion*, Fraad (2009) illuminates how emotional labor is a labor of love:

> Emotional labor is the expenditure of time, effort and energy utilizing brain and muscle to understand and fulfill emotional needs. By emotional needs, I mean the human needs for feeling wanted, appreciated, loved and cared for. Individuals' emotional needs are often unspoken or unknown/unconscious. Emotional labor often occurs together with physical labor (producing physical goods or services), but emotional labor differs from physical labor by aiming to produce the specific feelings of being wanted, appreciated, loved and/or cared for. (p. 137)

Another core dimension of burnout is depersonalization. Emotional exhaustion and increased cynicism toward others are interconnected. Emotional exhaustion appears to cause individuals to engage in distancing behaviors where they seek to self protect through disconnecting emotionally and cognitively from their work and those they work with and for (Maslach, 2003). "In burnout research, a strong relationship between exhaustion and cynicism is found consistently across a wide range of organizational and occupational settings" (Maslach, 2003). When teachers experience stress from aspects of their job, they behave differently towards their students by becoming less tolerant, less patient, less caring, and overall, less involved (Blasé, 1996). When human service professionals become emotionally depleted and exhausted, they tend to detach from their jobs by developing a callous attitude that projects a strong sense of lack of care (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004).

The third core dimension of burnout is lack of personal accomplishment or a diminished feeling of self-efficacy. Leiter (1992) describes burnout as a crisis in self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is associated with one's perception, appraisal, or judgment of how well they believe they can cope with job related demands (Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999). Bandura (1977, 1982) describes efficacy as the extent to which an individual feels capable of meeting the expectations of their role:

> Judgments of self-efficacy also determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles or aversive experiences. When beset with difficulties people who entertain serious doubts about their capabilities slacken their efforts or give up altogether,

> whereas those who have a strong sense of efficacy exert greater effort to master the challenges. (p. 123)

The way a health care or educational practitioner self-evaluates their capacity in meeting the demands of the job has a profound impact on how much stress they experience (Leiter, 1992). If a teacher does not feel she has the capacity to positively impact her work, this belief can negatively impact her self-esteem. Those called to human service oriented professions must embody healthy levels of self-efficacy in making on-the-spot decisions in a moment's notice. "An integral part of their role is the requirement to make myriad decisions and judgments involved in adapting services to the unique situation of a specific client" (Leiter, 1992, p. 109). Given this, professionals in the caring fields are at significant risk for burnout if they feel incapacitated or insecure in their ability to make effective micro-decisions in the moments of their work. If teachers routinely doubt their professional capacities, the "burn-out script [becomes] a negative self-fulfilling prophecy in that it diminishes the potential for subsequent effectiveness" (Leiter, 1992, p. 111).

The interaction between the three domains of burnout, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a diminished sense of self-efficacy become manifest (or embodied) through the following three stages (Larrivee, 2012): stage one - *stress arousal*: persistent anxiety, persistent irritability, forgetfulness, headaches, and inability to concentrate; stage two - *energy conservation*: lateness for work, procrastination, turning in work late, apathy, cynical attitude, and resentfulness; and stage three - *exhaustion*: chronic sadness, chronic stomach problems, chronic mental and physical fatigue, and a desire to 'drop out' of reality.

In *Present Teacher*™ Training sessions, we explicitly discuss the nature of burnout and explore the three stages in depth. It is interesting to witness the reaction of teachers when I show slides of the three stages of burnout. I always preface the previewing of the slides as an opportunity to gain deeper self-awareness around the ways burnout manifests in one's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual *being*-ness. As we explore these embodied manifestations of burnout, many teachers become visibly emotional. There was one teacher in particular who had a strong emotional reaction to learning about the symptoms of stage three burnout. She said shed was so emotional because it was the first

time she felt validated about her emotional reaction to the stress of the job. She said she always assumed that she was the only one who felt that way and had those symptoms. She explained how profound it felt to have learned that there was nothing wrong with her; that this increased awareness allowed her to no longer feel shame and guilt for feeling like person who could not handle being a teacher. It is interesting to note that in all my experience in raising teachers' awareness of the stages of burnout that no one has ever claimed to have NOT experienced any of the symptoms to some degree. In fact, many student teachers that I have worked with report feeling symptoms associated with stage three burnout before having entered the profession.

In addition to the emotional reactions I have witnessed many teachers have to increasing their awareness of the stages and manifestations of burnout, it appears that this collective experience becomes an opportunity to connect and feel supported. While some teachers visibly show dismay, shock, or sadness regarding the stages, others attempt to cope with humor. Almost always, teachers will joke with the peer sitting next to them as if to suggest, "Hey…there YOU are in stage 2!" Internalizing Jon Kabat-Zinn's sage advice that this is all too serious to take seriously (personal communication, 2016), I engage the friendly banter. We talk about how much easier it is to notice signs and symptoms of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual burnout in others than our very own selves. I then invite teachers to describe to the group what "that" teacher, one who is teaching "under the influence of burnout," I say, looks like. I have posed this question to hundreds educators, and every time the description of "that" teacher is always the same. "That" teacher is described as being resistant in staff meetings, easily triggered, impatient with students, angry, and has a bad attitude.

The room always grows silent when I suggest that they close their eyes and allow the image of one of *those* teachers to come into their mind. I suggest that they then imagine this teacher in her/his first year of teaching—imagine them vibrant, happy, and passionate. I then invite them to extend this teacher compassion knowing that perhaps this teacher was once "burning" brightly but did not have the support or resources available to help them learn how to cope with the stress of teaching. I then invite them to imagine "that" teacher they described to be inside of each of us in that space. I suggest the thought that we all have within us the capacity to *be* and *become* the teacher we desire

and imagine ourselves to be, *and* we also have within us the capacity to *be* and *become* "that" teacher. I then suggest another thought—that we are an integration of *both* of those teachers all the time. I suggest we consider the fact that we know from burnout research that those who are most susceptible to burning out are the ones who came to the profession burning the brightest—with intense energy, passion, and love. During this brief meditation, teachers are invited to remember that "that" teacher they described as reactive, withdrawn, and unhappy has the innate capacity to *be* passionate, loving, and compassionate.

After I suggest this series of thoughts, I pause. I feel the space. I read the energy circulating in the room. I then invite teachers to call up the image of "that" teacher inside of themselves. I then invite them to extend self-compassion for "that" teacher. I invite them to feel into a sense of knowing that "that" teacher is doing the best she can; that "that" teacher is trying to hold everything in place so perfectly, *because* she cares so much for her work and the students she serves; that "that" teacher is burning but that burning is coming out sideways because it is not grounded in her selfhood; that "that" teacher can breathe, ground into herself, and re-connect with the love that brought her to this work. After teachers take a series of conscious breaths to experience grounding down into themselves, I invite them to gently open their eyes. As they do, I encourage them to make eye contact with another teacher and send that love and compassion outwardly to them. I then always say, borrowing from Kahn's (2016) book, *Whatever Arises Love That*, "This is true for you, for your peers, and for your students— when you are in pain and suffering, you deserve more love, not less."

Impact of Burnout on Systems, Services, and Souls

"Staff burnout is a critical problem for human service professionals: It is debilitating to the workers, costly to agencies, and detrimental to clients" (Shinn et al., 1984, p. 864). Research indicates that burnout impacts not only the health and well-being of the teacher and/or health care practitioner, it also impacts the quality of student/ patient care and professional productivity, retention, and recruitment (Aiken, Clarke, Sloane, Sochalski, & Silber, 2002; Hersch et al., 2006; Kimball & O'Neill, 2002; Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, & Wilk, 2001; Milliken, Clements, & Tillman, 2007; West et al., 2016). Fewer individuals are going into the healing and care-oriented professions, and of

the ones who have answered the call to teach, the turnover rate is excessively high with nearly 50% of new teachers fleeing the profession in the first five years (Larrivee, 2012). Wallace et al. (2009) cite findings that indicated that "22% of new physician residents beginning their careers as doctors would not pursue medicine if given the opportunity to relive their career" (p. 1717).

Professional effectiveness in human service oriented work is significantly impacted by burnout. "It has been reported that teacher stress and burnout inevitably affect the learning environment and interfere with the achievement of educational goals insofar as they lead to teachers' detachment, alienation, cynicism, apathy, and absenteeism and ultimately the decision to leave the field" (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). Burnout in health care professionals is associated with suboptimal care and practices. Wallace et al. (2009) indicate results emerging from research that "physicians' stress, fatigue, burnout, depression, or general psychological distress negatively affects health care systems and patient care" (p. 1714). For the field of nursing, with nearly 4 million nurses in the Unites States, this sector of human service professionals are not only an indispensable component of the health care profession, they suffer from debilitating stress that has a significant impact on the quality of patient care (Aiken, Clarke, Sloane, Sochalski, & Silber, 2002; Hersch et al., 2006; Kimball & O'Neill, 2002; Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, & Wilk, 2001; Milliken, Clements, & Tillman, 2007).

The research on the impact of burnout on the selfhood of the practitioner is shocking and demands increased awareness. "Suicide rates for physicians are estimated to be six times higher than in the general population, their cardiovascular mortality is higher than average, and about 8-12% of all practicing physicians are expected to develop substance-abuse disorder at some point in their career" (Wallace, Lemaire, & Ghali, 2009, p. 1715; Baldisseir, 2007; Center et al., 2003). As it relates to the impact on the individual practitioner in a human service oriented profession, burnout becomes a "psychological syndrome" that results from prolonged exposure to workplace stressors (Maslach, 2003). More poignantly, given this dissertation's focus on the soul and spiritual well-ness of the professional, burnout is conceptualized as an "erosion of the soul" (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). From this vantage point, burnout represents:

> the index of the dislocation between what people are and what they have to do. It represents an erosion in values, dignity, spirit and will— an erosion of the human soul. It is a malady that spreads gradually and continuously over time, putting people into a downward spiral from which it is hard to recover. (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, p. 17)

The preponderance of evidence of burnout in the helping and healing professions is overwhelming. Thus, research that responds to this crisis in is demand. While burnout may be conceptualized as the erosion of the soul as a result of a spiraling of negative self-beliefs, limits in awareness of strategies to cope with the stress, and oppressive institutional influences that threaten the resilience of the personhood of the professional, mindfulness has been demonstrated to be both a practice and way of *being* that can increase one's quality of attention and awareness of the self, the situation, and the moment. Given that burnout is often described as a slow dis-integration of the self that goes unnoticed over time (Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999), increased self-awareness and the ability to direct one's attention onto one's emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual experiences helps to counteract the unconscious and often unnoticed process of burnout. Kabat-Zinn (2018) articulates the connection between our capacity to pay attention and our well-being:

> Consider the effects of not paying attention to what our bodies and minds are constantly telling us… if various signs and symptoms, even subtle ones, are ignored, left unattended for too long, and if the condition you find yourself in is too much of a burden on the body or the mind, this *dis-attention* can lead to *dis-connection*, the atrophying of disruption of specific pathways whose finely tuned integrity is necessary to maintain the dynamic process that underlie health. (p. 104)

Manifestations of burnout can be conceptualized as a result of too much "dis-attention" of one's internal experiences of responses to stress. "Mindfulness is an inner science, and we use our own minds, hearts, and bodies for the research. Instead of cold scientific study, we examine our inner lives with compassion and tenderness" (Rechtschaffen, 2014, p. 24). Research on mindfulness-based training programs for teachers show a decrease in anxiety, stress, and depression while experiencing an increase in compassion and positive states of mind, and "[t]he research seemed to find that teachers who had gone through the training had a greater capacity to experience the

inevitable stressors of teaching and maintain an emotional balance, responding not from their reactivity but from an empathic focus" (Rechtschaffen, 2014, p. 29).

Mindfulness makes a difference in how an individual metabolizes stress. Stress and challenge are unavoidable in life and in one's professional pursuits. But the manner in which one uses or metabolizes the stress, can make all the difference in whether they experience burnout or the building of resilience.

I have discovered through my own action research how mindfulness awareness can transform personal and professional stress in such a way that it becomes a catalyst for self-actualization. I learned the follow three principles:

1) When we show ourselves and another love, compassion, and care in times of deepest need, we heal each other and ourselves simultaneously.
2) Love for another can be a profound impetus for self-love and self-respect.
3) I am the one I am waiting for. My psychological, spiritual, mental, and physical self-care is my responsibility.

These principles were discovered and produced through traversing intense pain, confusion, suffering, and burnout, both personally and professionally. While personal well-being work is not easy, nor convenient, I have discovered it is necessary if we want to be of service in the way we most desire through our professional calling. The blessing and the curse is that *the* very stress that can serve to dis-integrate a teacher from her calling, herself, and her students is the very *same* stress that has the potential to be her greatest source of power in cultivating *teacher Presence*. Mindfulness is practice that can connect her with her greatest source of power in metabolizing stress in a functional way— her power of perception.

Provocation #1: …Leveraging disorienting dilemmas as sacred stress opportunities may provoke…

Mindfulness saved my life. While that may sound dramatic, it is the truth. My mindfulness practice brought me back from the brink of burnout. Actually, I was past the brink. I broke.

Like any good teacher really *knows* her content area, I *know* burnout. I *know* it emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually. Conversely, I also *know* "burning-in."

The creation of *Present Teacher* Training and the body of research in this dissertation are manifestations of *burning in* to myself through personal and professional stress.

Had I any emotional energy left in any crevice of my body, I would have felt jealous of the way the clouds so effortlessly floated through the sky, seemingly without a care in the world. Had I any mental energy in any crevice of my mind, I would have thought they were taunting me on purpose, showing off how easy it is to be free and effortless in *being*-ness. I felt and thought nothing that morning as I stood staring out of my bedroom window with a lifeless, gaze-less gaze at the sky. I had put myself in a self-imposed mom time-out. I was done for the day. I could just feel it; that feeling of no-thing-ness. Nothing left. Nothing to give. Nothing to feel. Done for the day at 6:30 am.

My newborn twins had been tag teaming me all night long. I swear they were communicating telepathically like twins do conspiring against me, saying "Hey, you stay up for this 2 hour stretch, and I will sleep. When I get up, I'll tag you, and you can sleep. We will keep her up all night long! It's brilliant plan." As I nursed two babies around the clock, attempted to calm screams and discomfort, cuddle, console, and *be* compassionate day and night, I was wearing thin. The moment, and I mean the *exact* moment, I would finally get both twins asleep, often after the 6:00 am feeding, my one-year seemed to tune into the drop in telepathic signaling as if to say, "My turn! I'll take my shift now. I've got you guys covered!"

It is crazy how when you are *this* exhausted you become absolutely convinced that everyone is conspiring to sabotage you—even your precious babies! Your child waking up in the morning after sleeping a great 7 hour stretch gets all tangled up in the head as a threat to your sanity, and you take her waking up personally, as if she is intentionally out to get you. Little did I know then that I was experiencing the depersonalization effect of burnout. My beautiful, healthy babies who were simply *being* babies, doing what babies do, became a threat to my livelihood. I could not see, think, or feel straight.

As the nights of care giving bled in mornings and days of more care giving, there was never enough respite or rest. I was always mothering. When one is on a two-hour nursing schedule, there is no night and day, no rest or recovery, no need to even engage in rituals like changing out of your clothes into pajamas in the evenings. What was the

point when you were up all night long? So mornings did not bring refreshment; they just brought more of "more to do." Not just that, I was meeting my mornings and the seemingly endless "doings" of the day physically exhausted. For the past nine months, my body had just nursed a one year old while growing two babies, and then gave birth to two babies thirteen minutes apart.

I came into my mothering every day from a depleted physical, emotional, and mental state. I also met each day from a depleted spiritual state. The year my one-year was born was my first year of doctoral studies at Michigan State University. After almost a decade as a public school teacher, I started graduate school to become a professor in education. I was called to teaching when I was six years old. Yes. I have always *known* that teaching was me. Just like becoming a teacher, I have always *known* I would become a professor. So when life came at me fast and furious with three babies (after I was told I could not have children, by the way), I felt as if the entire Universe was off kilter when I left my graduate work to say home full time to raise my children. Let me tell you, not being in a classroom as a teacher or student when the "back to school" energy surged messed with my entire sense of self. I am a teacher at my very core. So not *being* a teacher meant not *being* me.

So there I was, in my time-out at 6:30 am. While the twins slept, I put my one-year old in front of the television throwing in a hefty dose of mommy shame and guilt in the mix for resorting to the TV as her first encounter of the day. I went into my bedroom and closed the door. I was so depleted on the inside that I could not even produce tears. I remember looking out the window at the sky and the clouds. I took a deep breath. Thank goodness our bodies keep us breathing whether we care or not. Because in that moment, I did not care. I had no energy to care. In that moment of breath, there was silence. And then I heard it. A voice. (*I know what you are thinking; of course she heard voices!) However this voice was different in tone and quality that the inner voice that was beating the hell out of myself with anxiety, guilt, overwhelm, and all the other thoughts that go into a toxic mental mix of burnout. No. This voice did not sound the same as that voice. This voice was crystal clear, calm, and loving. All I remember it asking me was, "What do you need? What do you need to be the kind of mother you want to *be* to your daughters?"

Without any conscious effort, I instantly thought, "I need to teach. I need to write. I need get dressed in my favorite clothes! I need to create. I need to connect with other human beings. I need to express myself. I need to see myself. I need to feel myself." With that awareness, a flash of insight appeared out of that blue sky I was staring it. The flash of insight was felt, not thought. My intuition suggested: *practice what you know brings you back to yourself and then preach what you practice. Go do it now.*

I took another deep breath and felt an instant spark of passion and purpose reignite instantaneously. I walked out of the bedroom to my desk and grabbed a piece of paper. Within what felt like mere seconds, I did what I used to do as a teacher—I quickly sketched out an entire "unit" or outline of lessons for mindful mothering. In one moment of shift in perspective, Mindful Moms Network.com was born. Prior to becoming a mom, I had been practicing mindfulness, meditation, and yoga in my personal life since high school. In that one moment of inspiration, everything changed. Everything. In that moment I saw a purpose in my suffering. I found meaning in my pain. Perhaps this experience of burnout provided me with the material to do what I do best—research, teach, write, and extract meaning and insight. That single shift in perspective of my pain changed the course of my life and my professional passions and pursuits.

In *Man's Search for Meaning*, Victor Frankl (1985) says that suffering ceases to be suffering the moment you find meaning it. Frankl was an Austrian neurologist and psychologist who was a Holocaust survivor. He wrote extensively about how we cannot avoid pain and suffering, but that we choose how we cope with it, find meaning in, and move forward from it with a deeper purpose. He says this is "spiritual freedom" which is something that no one can ever take away. As I reflect on that moment of insight and inspiration in my mothering, it was a micro-miracle moment in that my thoughts, perception, emotions, and *being*-ness shifted from fear and depletion to love and hopefulness. I do believe that this micro-miracle moment was produced out of profound love and reverence for my children. In the depths of burnout, I found it difficult, if not impossible, to feel love for myself. I was too disconnected from her. The process of dis-integration had been deteriorating that relationship for over a year. However, I was still capable of feeling love. Because of the love I had for my children, I realized that I had to love myself. I had to take care of myself. If I wanted to *be* and *become* the mom they

deserved, I had to *be myself* while *being* a mother. That was a revelation that shifted my world-view. As a teacher and teacher educator, I transferred this insight to my professional practice. Because I loved my students and deeply desired to *be* and *become* the teacher they deserved, I had to *be myself* while *being* a teacher. And to *be* myself, I had to love myself and care for myself out of respect and reverence for them. Love begets love; this is known to be true. And love is what brings one back from (and past) the brink of burnout.

What I discovered past the brink of burnout is that there can be a spiritual purpose in stress and suffering if one can assume a perspective that perceives stress as productive and purposeful. To this day, I deeply desire to *be* compassionate when my (now ages 10 and 9) daughters are most in need of love and support; to *be* calm when they are upset and mad; to *be* centered when they are confused and uncertain. I am aware that the state of *being*-ness I desire to engage is often only cultivatable in moments when it is most challenged. For example, when my pre-teen is experiencing a rush of emotions that have the capacity to trigger my own emotional reaction, it is that exact moment when I am invited to cultivate calm and compassion—right there when I am most tempted to react. Mindful awareness helps me to notice those moments; moments when I feel my body starting to engage her energy. In this noticing, I enable myself with a choice of how I wish to respond based off my awareness of how I most desire to *be* as a mother in such moments.

What I discovered beyond the brink of burnout was that there was always, always, always a "diamond thought of light" to be found that could spark my courage to *be* and *become* the woman, mother, and teacher I desired to *be*. And I always, always, always found it when I connected with myself through mindful awareness in the middle of the chaos of moment.

For Courage

When the light around you lessens
And your thoughts darken until
Your body feels fear turn
Cold as stone inside,

When you find yourself bereft
Of any belief in your yourself

And all you unknowingly
Leaned on has fallen,

When one voice commands
Your whole heart
And it is raven dark,

Steady yourself and see
That it is your own thinking
That darkens your world,

Search and you will find
A diamond-thought of light,

Know that you are not alone
And that this darkness has purpose;
Gradually it will school your eyes
To find the one gift your life requires
Hidden within this night-corner.

Invoke the learning
Of every suffering
You have suffered.

Close your eyes.
Gather all the kindling
About your heart
To create one spark.
That is all you need
To nourish the flame
That will cleanse the dark
Of its weight of festered fear.

A new confidence will come alive
To urge you towards higher ground
Where your imagination
Will learn to engage difficulty
As its most rewarding threshold!

John O'Donohue (2007)

I discovered courage and power beyond the brink of burnout; the courage and power to see things differently and from different angles, integrate experiences according to what made sense for me, and to use stress as a point of power to fuel passion, determination, and love. I had stumbled upon a powerful truth of the resilience of the

human spirit— "that forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation. You cannot control what happens to you in life, by you can always control what you feel and do about what happens to you" (Frankl, 1959, p. x). I believe my mindfulness practice provided me the capacity to see that "diamond thought of light" in the darkness to re-see things differently; to re-orient my perspective away from fear to love. In this re-seeing, I was able to integrate the journey of motherhood as a spiritual practice and not a downward spiral of burnout.

Perceiving stress as a spiritual opportunity to deepen self-awareness, self-respect, and self-compassion is a foundational theme in *Present Teacher* Training; a theme that teachers in this study focused on both explicitly and implicitly through their engagement with the mindfulness program. It appears through the phenomenological material that a teacher's ability to perceive stress, not as a threat but as an "opportunity" of growth and transformation, allows them to more easily seek meaning and purpose in their struggles. I was in the middle of my data analysis and writing when this text came through from Aeo, a first year male teacher in this study. As a research participant, Aeo was aware that I was particularly curious about his experiences with observing stressful reactions in his teaching so to receive a text like from him this was not abnormal or out of the blue. He wrote:

> Who knew a group of twenty-one 8-year olds could completely unravel me. I'm usually cool and collected, even when things get a bit wild. Not today.
> 'Look at his face, it is so red! Why is your face so red?'
> 'Because I'm MAD, I responded.'
> Responding is generous, exploded is likely closer to the mark. After asking TW and KM to stop wrestling with each other for the (at least) fifth time I couldn't keep it together any longer. Regrettably, I LOST (emphasis original) it. This was the kind of yelling that you hear about from people talking about teachers they loathe. That's not me, is it? I sure as hell hope not. I love these kids, and I know, at least some of them like me. It's in these moments, when the explosion is brewing, and I feel like I am being pulled in 21 directions that I realize I can't even think.

Prior to this text, I had interviewed Aeo about how his perception of stress has shifted as a result of his mindfulness practice. In regards to how he now perceived stress, he said: "I

have come to see stress as something that can be good; as long as I am aware enough to know I'm stressed to take the time to work through it."

In *Present Teacher*™ Training, teachers intimately explore their stress triggers in the classroom as well as explore their own distinctive physical, psychological, emotional, and mental re-actions to the stress. Aeo remarks how important it is to notice when one is having a stress reaction. Mindfulness training increases one's capacity to notice subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) physiological and psychological reactions to stress so to slow down or diminish the onset of a full-blown reaction.

In Aeo's response about noticing his stress reactions and taking the time to process the stress in a conscious way, he appears to be aware of another challenge for those first cultivating a habit of mindful awareness of one's triggers—*remembering* one's capacity to *be* mindful in these moments. Smalley & Winston (2010) agree that it is very "*simple* to be mindful. Take a moment right now, stop reading, and feel your nose and body take one breath. You are present with that one breath. You are mindful in this single moment in time. It is simple to be mindful, but *remembering* to be mindful can be very difficult" (p. 17). I recall a teacher in one of the *Present Teacher*™ Training sessions declare to the cohort about mid-way through the program saying, "The hardest part is being mindful to be mindful!" Yes. Yes, it is. And I responded by saying that as teachers, we are so fortunate that our profession gives us countless opportunities every single day to remember and practice being mindful during moments of stress.

Aeo credits his dedication to his mindfulness practice for helping him to see stress as an opportunity to regulate his re-actions so he can *become* the teacher he desires to *be* for his students. During an interview where we were discussing how he uses stress to learn about himself as a teacher, he said:

> Taking the time to ID my triggers that lead to strong emotions has allowed me to notice when I'm about to react, take a deep breath, and then respond in the way I feel best meets the needs of my students.

I believe that it is my responsibility as a teacher educator, especially when I am in the role or mentoring student teachers in the field or working with first year teachers through *Present Teacher*™ Training sessions, to make explicit the moments in their teaching where I witness them engaging mindful awareness. I think it is important to not

only comment on what new teachers do pedagogically and instructionally well, but also bring to their attention the ways I notice them *being* self-aware, self-sufficient, and embodying a high level of conscious awareness. As their teacher, it my intention to hold up a metaphorical mirror so they can see what and how well they are doing in cultivating their self-efficacy and resilience as a teacher. After Aeo sent me the text thread where he shared his strong emotional reaction to a recent stressful event in his teaching, I responded the next morning by texting back:

> Good morning, Aeo. Thank you so much for trusting me with your writing and processing. This. Is. Incredible Awareness! This reflection is powerful. Here is what I see.
>
> This moment is refining you. Like coal becoming a diamond. Your spirit needs heat, anger, frustration, fear…. all the darkness to trigger stuff for you to process and heal. These students are like little teachers perfectly placed….every single one… to trigger the stuff you need to explore and release. The exploration and release comes through the reflection like this. So keep it up!!! It feels to me like this writing is healing. It is healing because in the re-telling, YOU empower yourself to extract the golden nuggets in your experience that are the key to your freedom. When you create space to reflect like this, YOU get to decide how you want to experience the experience. In the space that reflection allows between you and the experience, you will find what is true for you. Those are soul lessons, and they right there under your nose to help you feel all the heat and heartbreak so that your heart, while having tiny tears, heals and becomes more resilient. When you start to feel and express compassion and love for yourself in these moments, it is proof that your heart is getting stronger and stronger. THESE moments (like a weight lifter training a muscle and taking on heavier weights to tear the muscles) that you wrote about here are profound spiritual opportunities to soften your heart and become more compassionate, caring, and present. Keep doing the work. This IS the work. And it takes courage; which you have an infinite amount of. You've got this, Aeo. I believe in you. This is the spiritual process of BECOMING a teacher. Welcome. We are so thrilled you have answered the call.

Aeo's response was: "Thank you, Jen. I appreciate your support and belief in me. It did feel good to write after the most difficult day."

As I reflect on this interaction between us, I am struck by the resonance of the line in my text that reads: *In the space that reflection allows between you and the experience, you will find what is true for you.* Until I re-read this text in consideration of it as a piece

of phenomenological material, this line never stuck out to me. However, as I post-reflex during this analysis I am curious about what it produces in terms of the cultivation of *teacher Presence*. I contend that it is *in the space between* the stress trigger and a teacher's conscious response, that she empowers herself to decide how she wants to *be* and thus, actualize who she desires to *become*. This insight produced the conceptualization of the *Horizontal Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*.

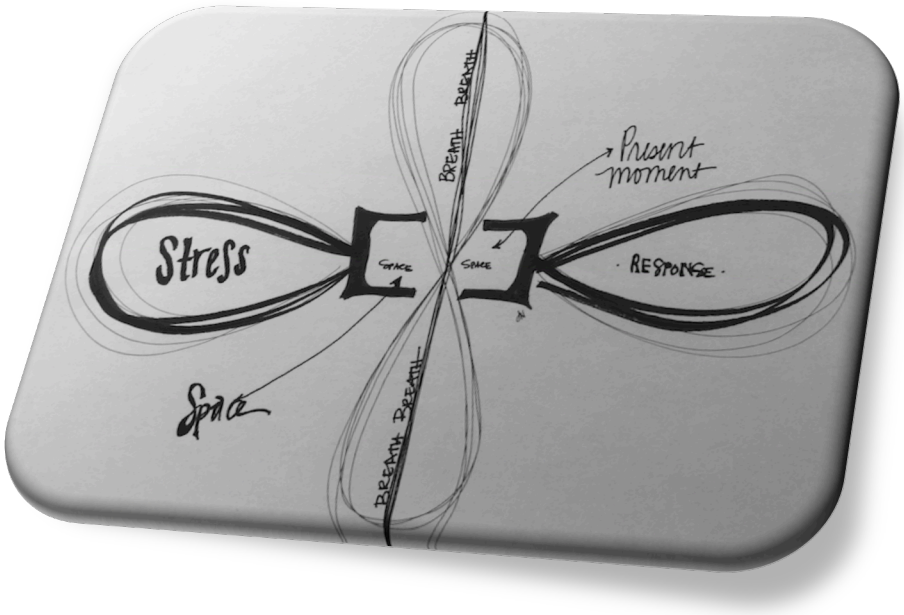

Image 4.1 Horizontal Loop of *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*

Frankl (1957) says "between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom" (p. 67). I read Aeo's self-aware recognition of the purpose and productivity of his stress reaction to be a production of his mindfulness practice. Based on the phenomenological material, I contend that when a teacher remembers to engage mindful awareness amidst the stress, engaging their power of attention to direct it in the body and onto the breath, they empower themselves to *be* and *become* the teacher they desire because they have gained freedom from unconsciously enacting habitual patterns of re-acting.

Exploring the phenomenon of the cultivation of *teacher Presence*, I claim that who a teacher is *being* and *becoming through the moments of stress* with mindful awareness allows them to self-actualize in a way that allows their truth and authenticity to

guide their *becoming*. For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), it is in the space *in-between* two points where *becoming* is actualized: "A line of becoming is not defined by points it connects… on the contrary, it passes *between* points, it comes up through the middle, it runs perpendicular to the points first perceived" (p. 293).

Transformative Learning Theory and the Disorienting Dilemma

We need stress. And it appears throughout the phenomenological material that stress is a critical element in the process of *being* and *becoming* a teacher, which is intimately entangled with the cultivation of *teacher Presence*. Kabat-Zinn (1990) says that stress is neither inherently good nor bad; rather it is our *perception* of stress that determines if the stress will demoralize us or be our greatest opportunity to maximize our full potential. Perception is everything. O'Donohue (1997) says:

> Perception is crucial to understanding. How you see, and what you see, determine how you will be. Your perception, or your view of reality, is the lens through which you see things. Your perception determines the way things will behave for you and toward you. We tend to perceive difficulty as disturbance. Ironically, difficulty can be a great friend of creativity. (pp. 154-155)

Stress is an essential element of perceptual change and expansion of awareness. For Mezirow (1997), a "disorienting dilemma" is the first phase of his 10 phases of perspective transformation. Mezirow's (1997) transformative learning theory extrapolates the process by which individuals revise and make sense out of how they perceive the world. Often one engages in perspective transformation when an "incongruent experience" cannot be assimilated into one's current meaning structure (Mezirow, 1997). This experience is then either rejected or one's perception of the experience must shift. Perspective transformation that is stimulated as a result of a stressful or painful experience that threatens the core of one's existence results in a more fully developed, inclusive, and critically reflective frame of reference, says Mezirow (1997).

Image 4.2 Tree on the Grounds of Ballynahinch Castle, Connemara, Ireland

The landscape of Ballynahinch Castle in Ireland held powerful insights about the nature of metabolizing stress to ignite spiritual actualization. One morning, I took a guided walking tour of the grounds of the Castle. My guide, Joshua, a young man who was finishing his master's thesis in recreational sports and wilderness training, would frequently stop our walks and talk about specific things on our path that one might miss entirely if they walked too quickly. I recall the moment Joshua paused to look at this particular tree, because it became a powerful moment of personal and professional insight about the purpose of stress and how integrating stress can provide a source of spiritual nutrition that aids in healing and growth.

Joshua asked me to stand a couple feet back from the tree and describe to him what I saw. I told him that I noticed it looked like two trees merging into one. I then walked up closer and started to touch the tree, sharing my observations aloud. I felt the moss and the mushrooms covering half of the tree; I traced the tendrils that hugged the left trunk of the tree, and I tilted my head all the way back so I could gaze up to see how far this tree stood up in the sky.

As I stepped back to take the whole of the tree in, Joshua explained how over the past 100+ years, this tree intuitively knew that a part of it was diseased. In that intuitive knowing, it started the process of allowing the diseased part of it self to fall away. The trunk of the tree that was leaning to the right was in a state of decomposition with the moss and mushrooms doing their job to break it down. This tree did not fear letting go of the part if it that was diseased. Rather, Josh said it intuitively knew that if the diseased part of it remained, the liveliness of its entire being was put at risk. So the tree allowed the diseased part go, knowing that that when it hit the ground below, the healthy part of itself could soak up all the nutrients from the decomposing part.

In that moment, I felt like I had experienced what O'Donohue (1997) says about the visible world being the first shoreline of the invisible world. Invisibly and imperceptibly this tree was in a process of *becoming* healthier and more fully itself through the visible process of letting go and decomposition. O'Donohue (1997) writes extensively about the vibrancy and aliveness of nature and the vastness of the invisible world. "A friendship with the invisible is vitally necessary for the interior life. Its not good for a person to linger too long in the world of the merely visible," he says (audio book). All of John O'Donohue's writing is deeply inspired by Celtic traditions of spirituality and the sacredness of the Irish landscape and nature. What I could see in the external world, the way the tree looked to me, was only the first shoreline of a vast invisible process of tree intuition, communication, regeneration, and growth.

When I contemplated the incredible, silent intuitive knowing of this tree in that moment, I was struck with the insight that created an expanded perception of the purpose of stress and struggle—that stress, loss, and even dis-ease *can be* and *become* vital nutrients for spiritual growth and healing. In this same moment, I recall having the insight that stress may actually be the greatest catalyst or invitation for cultivating trust one's self. Just as the tree trusted its self to let a part of its own self go, perhaps stress invites one into a deeper, more compassionate and reflective state of *being*-ness with the self—of trusting one's inner emotional and psychological experiences that stress evokes. In my post-reflexion journal of this experience, I wondered if the same could be true for teachers when they hit moments of stress or "disorienting dilemmas" in their professional practice; that while difficult, trusting one's intuitive knowing in challenging or stressful

moments may allow one to metabolize the experience in a way that leads to greater re-connection with the self and spiritual regeneration.

Celtic spirituality believes that times of apparent contradiction between what one desires and what is happening in reality leads to special insight or gifts of the spirit (O'Donohue, 1997). There appears, even in nature, to be great purpose in "suffering" even amidst the loneliness, uncertainty, and letting go that accompanies it. O'Donohue (1997; 2008) says that suffering brings us to a new threshold— out of our pain on to new landscape of possibility and potential. "The rains of suffering are the fresh creative rains which awaken the new soil of springtime within our inner landscape, and that brings us to new creativity, possibility, and growth" (audiobook, 1997).

Reflecting back on Aeo's processing of his strong emotional re-action to a stressful event in his teaching is interpreted here as an act of spiritual regeneration[16]. I contend that he intentionally and consciously (i.e., with mindful awareness) metabolizes the emotions of the stress moment through reflection in a way that is guiding him to deeper insight and intuitive knowing about who he desires to *become* and *be* as a teacher. Aeo's reflection went on to express more details of that moment:

> [My] explosion was the result of an unforgivable sin with these kids; the dreaded, unstructured time. Finding a way to limit these unstructured times is paramount. I realized in these moments, when the explosion is brewing, and I feel like I'm being pulled in 21 directions that I realize I can't even think. In my first week I was working with a small group at my table and the seeds of my first explosion were seeding deep in the under belly of my sub conscious. The explosion did not occur this day, but I discovered the crippling effects chaos has on my ability to process information.

Aeo describes how this moment produced an opportunity for insight into the type of teacher he does *not* want to be; how unstructured time is, for him, the kiss of death in his ability control classroom chaos from taking over the space. Most importantly, it may be interpreted through this phenomenological material that he gains in-sight and self-awareness of how the external chaos in the classroom is inter-connected with a felt-ness

[16] "Spiritual regeneration" in this context alludes to the act of self-actualization; of connecting with one's truth, values, and through extracting personally relevant meaning from stressful experiences in a way that allows one to become who they desire to be.

of internal chaos manifesting in both an eruption of anger as well as an in ability to process basic information:

> I was sitting there in front of three kids ready to learn with three markers in my hand. I stammered, stuttered, and eventually reset. I could not even name these three colors the kids were supposed to sort their new phonics words with. In this moment, when these three innocent souls hanging on my every word must have been thinking, "are you fucking kidding me, Mrs. G?" This is the clown you picked to replace Mrs. A? What the fuck where you thinking? He can't even tell the difference between orange and blue!"

Aeo concludes his processing of this stress moment with a shift in perspective and attitude by closing with, "As I walk out the back door, on this day of days, and the songbird who's buy-in I need most waves and says good-bye; I remember, we will get there someday."

Based on this phenomenological material, I believe that through intentionally reflecting on this "dis-orienting dilemma," Aeo produced the necessary space to process his emotional and mental re-actions which then, in turn, allowed him shift his inner emotional energy state from fear-based re-acting to love-infused hopefulness. Given the last line of the text, "As I walk out the back door, on this day of days, and the songbird who's buy-in I need most waves and says good-bye; I remember, we will get there someday," I believe expresses Aeo's capacity to be mindfully reflective about this stress moment in a personally meaningful way that gives rise to a renewed sense of hope and purpose in his capacity and desire to teach. It may be read that this stressful moment created an opportunity for him to re-connect with and deepen his passion and commitment to teach—even on those days when a teacher questions why they even answered the call in the first place.

It appears throughout the study that cultivating and maintaining a strong sense of self amidst the dis-orienting dilemmas that are inherent in human service work like teaching is about continually restoring one's emotional, mental, and spiritual balance. Kabat-Zinn (1990) describes this capacity to balance one's self or bounce back after experiencing a stress reaction as "stress hardiness." Stress-hardy individuals demonstrate three psychological characteristics: *control, commitment,* and *challenge.* Kabat-Zinn

(1990) says that according to Dr. Kobasa, who studies people who thrive on stress or have endured extremely stressful situations, says:

> People who are high in *control* have a strong belief that they can exert an influence on their surroundings, that they can make things happen…. People who are high in *commitment* tend to feel fully engaged in what they are doing from day to day and are committed to giving these activities their best effort. People who are high in *challenge* see change as a natural part of life that affords at least some chance for further development. This view allows stress-hardy individuals to see new situations more as opportunities and less as threats… (p. 203)

Burnout in human service oriented work is associated with increased self-doubt and a diminished sense of self-efficacy. It appears that how an individual perceives themselves and their capacity to cope with stress makes a remarkable difference on the manner in which they *experience* experiences of stress. *How* we see directly shapes and influences *what* we will see. "When we come upon a new experience, our meaning perspective acts as a sieve though which each new experience is interpreted and given meaning" (Taylor, n.d.). These "frames of reference" define our life world, Mezirow (1997) says and are the set of assumptions through with we understand our experiences (p. 5). It may be inferred through the phenomenological material in this study that mindful awareness training enables teachers to increase their conscious awareness and control over the manner in which they *experience* the experience of stress thus producing, *through the stress*, spiritual insights that deepen self-trust, self-compassion, and faith in the self. It becomes thinkable that gaining spiritual insight that leads to a deeper connection with the self *through stress* is an important element in the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*.

The teachers in this study were asked to describe how their perception and experience of stress changed throughout the *Present Teacher*™ Training course. Ruth said that one of her insights "has been about the 'tunnel vision' created by stress or pain." She said she discovered that "when that negative perspective takes hold, all you can 'see' or 'be' is the misery. You'll only notice misery, feel misery, failure, shame, or whatever pain." Ruth then described the mindful awareness process and practices she learned that help her to re-orient her perspective of the stress. She said, "acknowledging the emotion— letting it go— choosing to take or try a varied perspective, breathing joy and

loving kindness…" are all practices she uses to see *beyond* the stress in a way that allows her be in control of how she experiences it.

Kukuman described a similar process: "I realized my stress level is deeply connected to my perception of the situation and my desire to try to control everything. I am letting go of control. That is helping!" Haley said, "I am under a lot of stress at work from all directions. I know that the stress is there but the more I practice mindfulness and listening, the easier I find the stress to manage." Haley also described how she believed her capacity to reconnect with her breath amidst stressful moments in her teaching helps her to control and regulate how she shows up to students: "I think the very best strategy is to ground myself and concentrate on my breathing. I try to listen to the situation I'm in with an optimistic curiosity."

In this study, teachers often cited that at the heart of their "stress" is felt sense of loss of control—and that when they "lose control," their emotions get the best of them. Many described losing control to be a characteristic of *becoming,* like, Aeo said, "that" teacher they do not imagine or desire themselves to *be*. The phenomenological material suggests that they are discovering that *being* present in the moment, especially when it is stressful, produces inner control that allows them to choose how to respond in a way that is more in alignment with how they desire to *be* in that moment. "Mindfulness is about giving yourself choice with your thoughts. You can exert some control over them rather than being at their mercy" (Smalley & Winston, 2010, p. 14).

Promising evidence from this study indicates the duration of time between (or in) the stress moment and a teacher's response (or reaction) may be shortened as a result of mindfulness training. It can be inferred that when teachers engage present moment awareness through the deliberate act of taking a breath in the middle of a stress moment they empower themselves to shift their perspective in a way that allows them to both *be* and *become* the teacher they desire. Smalley and Winston (2010) say:

> By practicing present-time awareness, *even in the midst of a difficult situation,* you can become aware of you impulses (your reactive patterns), stop, perhaps take a breath, and respond skillfully in a way that does not lead to more harm. (Smalley & Winston, 2010, p. 15)

Barbara, an elementary school music teacher, speaks to this capacity of being able to exercise choice in her perceptions, thoughts, and response *in the middle* of stress moments:

> Before this class I often felt like stress 'snuck up on me.' My reactions were often just surprising—reacting without thinking or 'blowing up.' Now I feel I have a better idea of the things that cause stress—often things of my own creation—and I feel like I do a better job of not allowing the stresses to cause or control my reactions. I feel calm.

Barbara attributes this capacity to her mindfulness training and learning specific strategies to use in the moments of teaching to transform the stress into an opportunity for *being* and *becoming* the teacher she desires to be. "I find myself using a pause during teaching to check in with my own emotions and a pause to 'read' my students or a situation. I try to be more reflective about issues that have happened and troubleshoot solutions for next time," she said. I suggest that Barbara has an awareness of how "learning to return [her] mind to the present, no matter what is happening—is tremendously helpful for working with challenging thoughts, emotions, and experiences" (Smalley & Winston, 2010, p. 14). This particular phenomenological material provoked and produced the conceptualization of the *Horizontal Infinity Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model.* The horizontal loop signifies the "trans-formation" or the changing of form of the stress experience into a moment of increased self-awareness and self-trust that ultimately gives rise the manifestation of a desired response (and not predictable reaction) that is in alignment with the value system of the teacher.

Horizontal Infinity Loop: Transformation

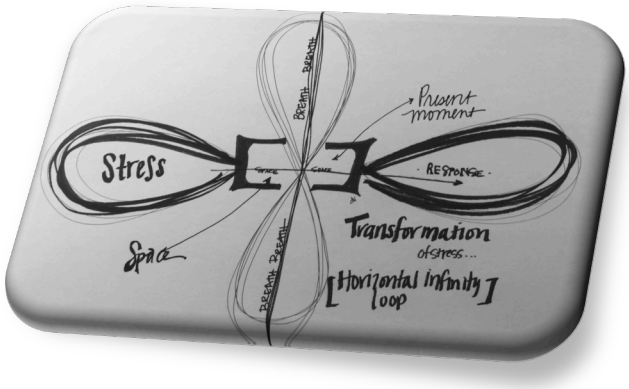

Figure 4.3 Infinite Well-Being Integration Model: Horizontal Loop: Transformation

"Sometimes difficulty is the greatest friend of the soul" (O'Donohue, 1997, p. 186). Stress is unavoidable both personally and professionally, but given the phenomenological material, there is great promise, though mindful awareness, in exercising one's innate ability to trans-form stress into moments self-actualization and stress hardiness. It may be inferred that when a teacher engages difficulty with quality awareness— an awareness cultivated through mindfulness that roots her in herself through her breath and *being*-ness in the present moment— creates the space to produce a shift in perspective that may, in turn, shift the energy of the experience in a way that is in greater alignment with who she desires to *be* and *become* as a teacher.

Teaching as a Spiritual Practice

The *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model* is an attempt to make visible the invisible contingent (i.e., in context) and recursive (i.e., happening over and over again) energetic process of cultivating *teacher Presence.* This model theorizes that stress is a necessary component of spiritual self-actualization, and that the inherent stressors that a teacher (or physician, nurse, therapist, mother, etc.) experience through their daily work can *become* rich moments of self-discovery and self-actualization if processed through the perspective and *being*-ness of mindful awareness (i.e., trans-formation of an experience). It is further conceptualized through this model that experiencing moments of stress with mindful awareness may produce, as a by-product effect of *being* present for the self in the stress, a capacity to *become* more than one's self (i.e., transcend) through the embodiment of compassion, kindness, presence, and love.

For those called to the healing and helping professions, it is vital to remember that "[l]ife is painful at times, and spiritually, we are meant to face the pains that life presents" (Myss, 1997, p. 38). Given the phenomenological material, I contend that the pains and challenges one encounters in their calling to teach may *become* and be read as *being* the exact challenges that serve as the catalyst to provoke and produce opportunities for one to *be* and *become* their most authentic and actualized self. It becomes thinkable that the professional "calling" that summons individuals to human service oriented work may not *only* be about being called to serve, heal, help, and teach other human beings, it may *also* (perhaps even primarily) be a spiritual calling or summons to serve, heal, help, and learn more about one's self. If perceived this way, one's professional practice may also *be* and

become one's (personal) spiritual practice. It becomes thinkable that the self-actualization of the personhood of the teacher (nurse, therapist, school counselor, physician, etc.) co-arises co-dependently through the manner in which they engage their *being*-ness in their professional role.

Principles and practices that ground the *Present Teacher*™ Training program rest on the fundamental belief that teaching, as a professional practice, can either serve to dis-integrate or deepen one's relationship with one's self. Teachers can either "burn in" or "burn out" through the profession. *Present Teacher*™ Training assumes that mindful awareness *may become* the fulcrum point where a teacher can gain advantage over the heat and external forces inherent in the profession so to intentionally leverage the stress a source of spiritual self-actualization. "As decades of research have shown, mindfulness can serve as a powerful ally in facing and transcending the challenges of stress, pain, and illness throughout life" (Kabat-Zinn, 2018, p. xiii).

For example, one specific core feature of *Present Teacher*™ Training that rests on the assumption that stress and "disorienting dilemmas" are necessary elements to cultivating *teacher Presence* is the practice of meditation. Meditating can be a disorienting dilemma in and of its self. As teachers engage in the different types of mindfulness meditation experiences (e.g., body scans, walking meditation, silent seated meditation, yoga, guided meditation, mindful eating, and mindful journaling), they encounter the instability of their mind. Meditation is not about stopping the thoughts or about suppressing reactions or feelings. Rather, meditation is the practice of attempting to direct and sustain one's attention on one's lived experience of the present moment; noticing thoughts, sounds, sensations, and emotions as they arise and learning how be with them, intimately, as they are, without desiring for them to be any different. In his recent book *Meditation is Not What You Think: Mindfulness and why it is so important*, Kabat-Zinn (2018) says:

> It is not uncommon for people to think they know what meditation is, especially since it is so much in the common parlance now… But actually and quite understandably, most of us may be harboring fairly narrow or incomplete perspectives on what meditation is and what it can do for us… We could say that in essence, it is a direct and very convenient way to cultivate greater intimacy with your own life unfolding with your innate capacity to be aware. (pp. ix-x)

In *Present Teacher*™ Training sessions, teachers engage in hours of both formal and informal meditation practices where they practice *being* with the present moment (and themselves) as it is— *being* with the "wanted and the unwanted," the unnoticed, and all that unfolds within it (Kabat-Zinn, 2018, p. xi). Central to the practice of meditation is the breath as "[o]ur breathing has the virtue of being a very convenient process to support ongoing awareness in our daily lives" (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p. 49).

The image below of the left-hand side of the *Horizontal Infinity Loop of Transformation* represents the invisible process of stress transfiguration at the threshold of breath and present moment awareness.

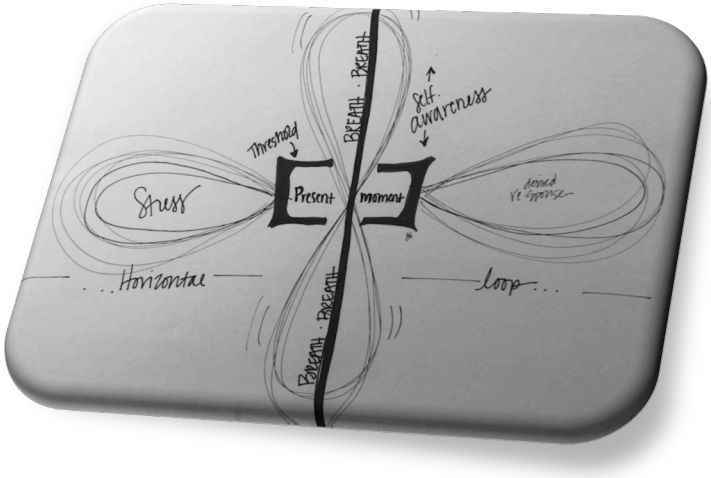

Image 4.4 Horizontal Infinity Loop of the *Infinite Well-Being Model*

This model is a visible production of the invisible process of the cultivation of *teacher Presence*. It suggests that the stress can become *transformational* of one's professional practice in that it can produce expanded self-awareness (i.e., seeing the self as capable in the stress), situational awareness (i.e., seeing the stress as productive not destructive), and other awareness (i.e., gaining a clearer perception of the other individuals within the stressful experience) and "acts as the recurring signal of an ever-expanding consciousness. No matter how uncomfortable or inconvenient it seems, the intensity you feel confirms that an important transformation is taking place" (Kahn, 2016, p. 176).

This model illuminates how "stress," when met with mindful awareness, becomes a necessary and productive catalyst for personal transformation or change in perspective.

It suggests that when teachers *become* present and mindful in the moments of an emotional or stress trigger, they may expand their awareness of their inner (emotional and mental) states which in turn may allow them to see with clearer in-sight the conditions of the external reality. In effect, their perceptions shifts from a place of fragmentation and dis-integration to a perspective from the vantage point of wholeness. When one engages a profound change in trans-formation of perception, healing is often described as the result (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). "When we glimpse our own completeness in the stillness of any moment… a new and profound coming to terms with our problems and our suffering begins to take place" (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p. 168).

Initial reactions to stress can be mentally, physically, spiritually, or emotionally painful. "Part of pain's role is to make you more honest with yourself about the things you can't control" (Kahn, 2016, p. 177). Through exploring the lived experiences of teachers in this study who met moments of stress with mindful awareness, it may be inferred that the pain triggered by stressful experiences can refine the individual in a way that they "burn in" to themselves through befriending their emotional reactions and mental agitations with a present, compassionate, nonjudgmental awareness.

Pain, dis-orienting dilemmas, and stress triggers may also serve as another important catalyst for human service professionals to "burn in" to themselves and cultivate self-awareness and self-efficacy. Kahn (2016) states that experiences of mental, emotional, or physical pain are "faithful agent[s] of truth that resurface in life to help you become more open, receptive, and vulnerable instead of fearful, desperate, and defeated" (p. 177). Teachers in this study who engaged in the *Present Teacher* Training program have direct experience with reflecting on the way they "behold" themselves when they are in pain or feel depleted by the conditions of their work. Personal reflection, as a form of mindful journaling, is intended to create space for teachers to explore how they treat themselves in times of struggle and suffering. Self reflecting on the prompt, "How do you behold yourself during stress?" many teachers cite how healing it feels to just *be* present for the self in a way that does not exacerbate the stress by adding a layer of guilt, fear, or shame.

"All problems, all stresses present an opportunity for spiritual learning in which you can gain insight into the use, misuse, or misdirection of your personal power" (Myss,

1997, p. 38). The phenomenological material indicates that teachers who meet stress equipped with the perceptual agility to see stress as functional as well as stabilize their initial reaction to the stress so to gain a baseline of calm and perspective are able to integrate the stress in a way that invites them to strategically gain direct access to their personal power. Myss (1997) refers to this process as "symbolic sight" in her book, *Anatomy of the Spirit*. Symbolic sight is the ability to interpret and integrate the experiences of our lives in personally meaningful ways. In effect, stress may be seen as sacred opportunities designed to trigger emotional reactions that when met with the breath and mindful awareness can become opportunities for deeper self-discovery, self-awareness, and self-transformation.

In moments when we become triggered, we are invited to notice the way the external reality we are experiencing is in contradiction with an internal desire for that reality. For example, many teachers say that student "off task" behavior is source of stress. In effect, teachers are saying that their desire and expectation for the moment— that students be on task— is not being met with the reality of what is. A teacher's perception of what they believe *should* be happening is in contrast with what *is* actually happening. This "disorienting dilemma" is designed to cause an energetic reaction through our emotional response so to grab our full attention and look inward at the way our perceptions, beliefs, and expectations of reality are not being met. The way a teacher perceives her world is composed of two dimensions— habits of mind and point of view:

> Habits of mind are broad, abstract, orienting, habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and acting influenced by assumptions that constitute a set of codes. Habits of mind become articulated in a specific point of view— the constellation of belief, value judgment, attitude, and feeling that shapes a particular interpretation. (Mezirow, 1997, pp. 5-6)

Moments of stress hold the potential to *be* and *become* incredible opportunities of self-discovery because they invite one into exploring their unconscious habits of mind and points of view. If one meets one's self in such moments with curiosity and nonjudgment, there is a great opportunity to discover and explore their values, beliefs, and core principles of the self. "When a person seeks to see more, healing is inevitable," says Myss (1997) (p. 57). In this way, at the onset of a stress trigger (or after the event

has passed and the teacher creates the space to reflect) is an invitation to discover more ground in the hidden territory of the interior life.

Teachers who engage the perceptual agility to meet stressful moments as an opportunity, not as an inherent threat, appear to increase their ability to spiritually integrate these experiences in a way that is healing and self-integrating. Myss (1997) says:

> Find meaning in them. Think and feel how they connect to your health. Bring attention every day to the challenges you face and to how your mind and spirit respond to them. Observe what causes you to lose power, and where you feel the loss. (pp. 57-58)

The teachers in this study who practiced meeting stressful moments from a vantage point of self-worth, self-discovery, and self-healing appear to have integrated the stress in a way that allowed them to *become* more like the teacher they desired to *be*. *Being* with the self in this way, nonjudgmentally noticing physical, emotional, and mental reactions during (or upon reflection of) stress events appears to be the primary invitation for cultivating *teacher Presence*. As one beholds their *being*-ness in moments of stress in functional ways, they appear to enable themselves to *become* the teacher they desire to *be*. This integrated *being-ness* in the present moments of stress interacts intimately with their *becoming* in a way that gives them ultimate control over their self-actualization, healing, and state of overall well-being.

Phenomenological material from Beth's reflection on how she beholds herself during stress illuminates the way she comes into her own *being-ness* in a way that appears to cultivate trust, love, and capacity in herself. These are some of her "expansive thoughts," as she called them, that she discovered during the mindful journaling experience about the way she beholds herself during moments of stress in teaching. She writes:

> You have the power to impact lives positively.
> You are doing your best.
> You can relax without fear of missing something.
> You are not to blame.
> Perfect is unattainable and not expected.

For Sara, her reflection on how she "beholds" herself during stress illuminates her "I ADTAT" statements. "I ADTAT" was her acronym for "I am developing the ability

to…". Sara realizes that the work of self-actualization, *being* and *becoming* her most authentic, healthy self through the challenges and dilemmas of teaching is a never ending, nor ever perfected, process. She writes:

> I ADTAT (*I am developing the ability to…):
>
> - sit with the discomfort of feeling pressured without reacting to it and respond to it instead.
> - sit with the pressure to HEAR EVERYONE (original emphasis).
> - sit with fear without reacting to it, to give me the TIME and SPACE (original emphasis) to craft a response.
> - recognize when I feel overwhelmed and offer myself self-compassion. I can forgive myself for not meeting everyone's needs. I can recognize that I don't need to take away another's right to own their own discomfort and work through it themselves.
> - look back at my reflections and remind myself why I LOVE (original emphasis) this work.
> - sit with fear and disappointment and just notice it without having to follow it.

Through this phenomenological material, I claim that teachers *become* more self-aware, self-compassionate, and self-loving when they engage their personal power through choosing how they integrate their stressful experiences. An experience that has the potential to create mental, emotional, and spiritual *dis-ease* and *dis-integration* (i.e., burnout) *becomes* an opportunity for self-evolution and self-transcendence.

Provocation #1: …Leveraging "disorienting dilemmas" as sacred stress opportunities may provoke…

Provocation #2: … the Cultivation self-integration and intuitive resistance…

"To be mindful means to be aware. It's the energy that knows what is happening in the present moment… It's the energy that helps us be aware of what is happening right now and right here, in our body, in our feelings, in our perceptions, and around us" (Hanh, 2014, p. 17). The second core component of the stress transformation *Horizontal Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integrated Model* is coming into the present moment, and bringing the mind and body into alignment through mindful awareness and the breath.

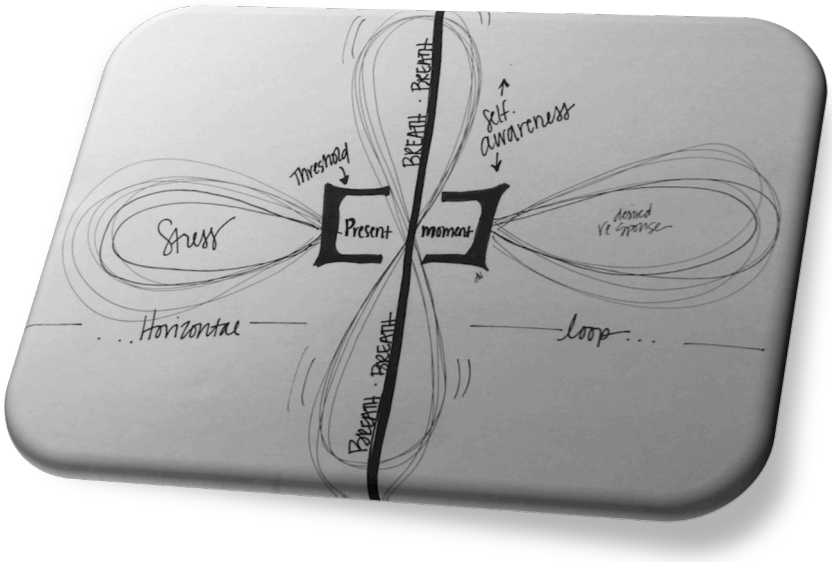

Figure 4.5 Breath and the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*

Present moment awareness, gained through connecting with the breath, brings one in alignment with one's body, feelings, and mind. In effect, it appears, through exploration of the phenomenological material, that when teachers consciously connect with their breath, they connect with themselves and their personal power.

Hope, a second year kindergarten teacher, describes how she consciously uses her breath to ground herself in stressful teaching moments and the way she deliberately integrates breathing in her teaching with her kindergartners:

> With my students, we breathe everyday. When I am feeling stressed, I'm like, *We are all going to take three breaths together, touch your belly*. It does have a direct impact in a lot of ways but also teaching it to kids through their own learning…it's a cool cycle. I have 5 year olds breathing on their own in line when they are crazy. I didn't even say anything. They are self-regulating. I've caught them a couple times doing belly breathing when they are being crazy in line; like some of my boys. It is so cool!

Breathing techniques are a central element of many contemplative and meditative traditions. Connecting with the breath is directly related to mental, emotional, and psychological well-being. Larrivee (2014) says:

> Although the mind has the power to control the body, it is influenced by the body. Mental anxiety is not possible whenever you are in a relaxed state. By maintaining an even, steady breath you maintain a state of physiological balance. This means you can achieve a significant degree of

control over your emotions by learning to regulate the breath. (p. 151)

As the teachers in this study used their breath to access the present moment, the breath appeared to neutralize their emotional states during stress triggers, bringing about the opportunity for them to engage a different emotion that feels better and more in alignment with their core values, purposes, and passions as a teacher. Teachers often cite not being able to cope with their own emotional reactions to the stressors of teaching as a source of additional stress. "Emotional stress and poor emotional management consistently rank as the primary reasons teachers become dissatisfied and leave teaching" (Larrivee, 2012, p. 51), and research suggests that strong emotional reactions like anger, frustration, anxiety, and sadness exacerbated a teacher's felt lack of control (Larrivee, 2012; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). Given this information, is paramount that teachers learn about the ways mindful awareness can create opportunities for them to reclaim their power *through* expressing and feeling their emotions.

In addition, when teachers feel out control due to a perceived inability to regulate their strong emotional reactions, it may exacerbate a teacher's sense of ineffectiveness and diminish their sense of self-efficacy. Strong negative emotional reactions tend to run counter to their values and ideals of how a "good" teacher "should be" in the classroom setting. Taking a breath in a moment of stress appears to allow an opportunity for them to gain awareness of and thus consciously regulate their emotional reaction. "When we bring our mind home to our body, something wonderful happens; our mental discourse stops its chattering" (Hanh, 2014, p. 24). When our minds stop chattering, we gain a mental and embodied spaciousness to process strong emotions in a functional way.

Our mental chatter and our emotional reactions are interconnected. For example, feelings like shame and guilt often arise from thoughts that are blaming and judgmental (Tan, 2012). It appears through this phenomenological exploration that teachers who engaged mindful awareness were able to notice and name the ways they were unproductively *thinking* about themselves, their students, or the moment they found themselves in. We often joke in our *Present Teacher* Training sessions about our innate propensity to "should all over the place" and how mindful awareness allows us to notice when our thinking mind is "shoulding" all over the present moment.

Teachers in this study illuminate how catching their breath and *becoming* present

in the moment allowed them to gain awareness of the stream of thoughts that were causing their stress reaction. Being able to bear witness to the reality of the self, one's mind, and one's reactions to external experiences are key elements of healthy self-esteem. In his book, *The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem*, Branden (1994) says that "high self-esteem is intrinsically reality oriented. No one can feel competent to cope with the challenges of life who does not treat seriously the distinction between the real and the unreal" (p. 45). I assert that as teachers engage their mindful awareness practice through accessing their breath and coming into the present moment, they enable themselves to feel the reality and truth of their emotional reactions; noticing if how they were feeling was conducive to how they desired to *be* as a teacher. This capacity to be with the self as one is in the moment appears to create a state of inner acceptance of "what is." When teachers come into contact with the present moment through their breath, in terms of psychological benefits, Larrivee (2104) says that "you move from a thinking, abstract mode of being to a more pristine, perceptual mode of being…Over time, you become more able to act and respond effectively" (p. 151).

Breathing into the present moment appears to provoke a shift in a teacher's state of *being-ness*. It may be interpreted that the moment a teacher engages her breath, she engages her power and reclaims her energetic capacity to transfigure emotional energy that may bleed out as anger, frustration, or self-doubt into the emotional energy of self-control and self-confidence. Haley describes how connecting to her breath during moments of teaching creates a cascading effect of relaxation in her body that allows her to re-integrate with herself while she is teaching: "You go to your core and reignite your value system. It is getting more into yourself. Not in a selfish way, but in a way where I can determine what is important for me; what I can change and what I cannot."

She then described how this worked energetically for her as she sought to reclaim optimism after feeling "beaten-down" in teaching. "If you feel beaten down, you get your playfulness back after you breathe," she said. Connecting to the breath appears to be a powerful mindful awareness practice that invites teachers to engage their present moment *being-ness* in a way that creates a point of personal power where they can actualize their desired state of *becoming* within the window of the present moment. The *Vertical Loop*

of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model* conceptualizes what appears to be happening in the cultivation of *teacher Presence* as she engages the breath.

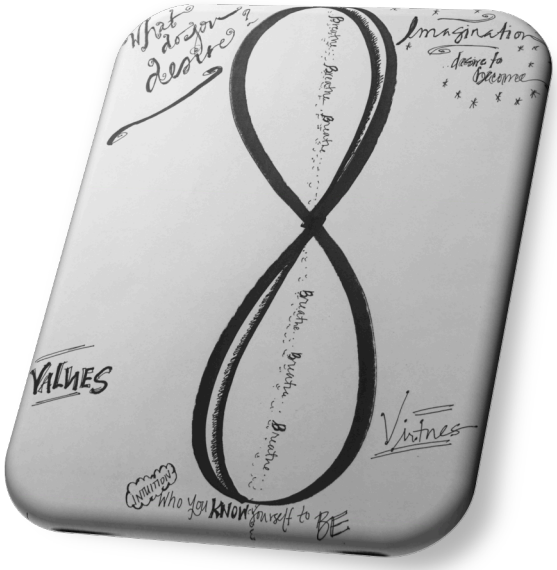

Figure 4.6 Vertical Loop of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*

Based on phenomenological material in this study, I suggest that when teachers connect with their breath, they connect with themselves in a way that brings about an integration of their self-hood that allows them to re-connect with their eros (i.e., desire), passion, and core values (lower loop of *Vertical Infinity Loop*) and engage their imagination of who they desire to become as a teacher (upper loop of *Vertical Infinity Loop*).

Ruth says, "I am trying to notice moments of integration of self in the moment" when she shared with me how she intentionally uses her mindfulness practice to *be* and *become* more present in her teaching. She also shared that she routinely uses the following mindfulness strategies/ experiences to self-integrate:

> stopping to breathe, using a glitter jar, daily meditations, reading, thinking thoughts of loving-kindness for others, pausing to bring a smile-lightness-joy in, and non-selective perception while practicing with a class.

After describing these strategies, she said that "a student told me they liked my smile. They blurted it out loudly in class one day." It appears that Ruth's students are noticing her dedication to her well-*being*-ness through her mindfulness practice. Ruth emailed me

this image after the completion of our training program. She said it was a random note left for her by a student before Christmas break:

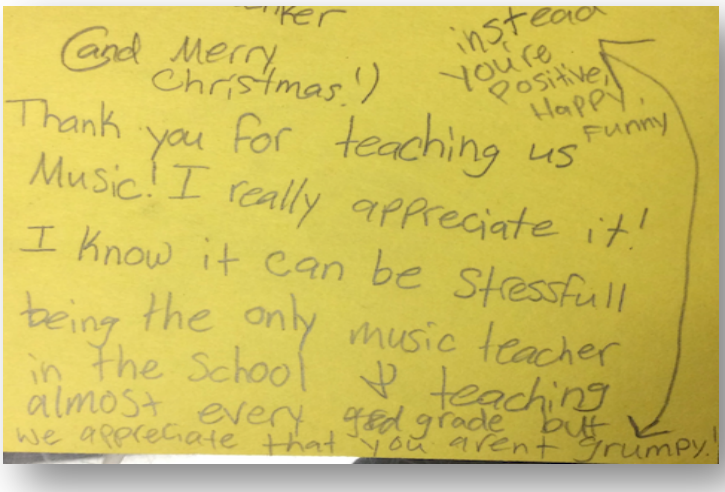

Figure 4.7 Student Sticky Note

Ruth and I also discussed what she felt the overall, unexpected benefit was from participating in a mindfulness training program for teachers. She responded by saying, "a re-integration of myself into my teaching that empowers and equips me to make the right choice for my students in the moment."

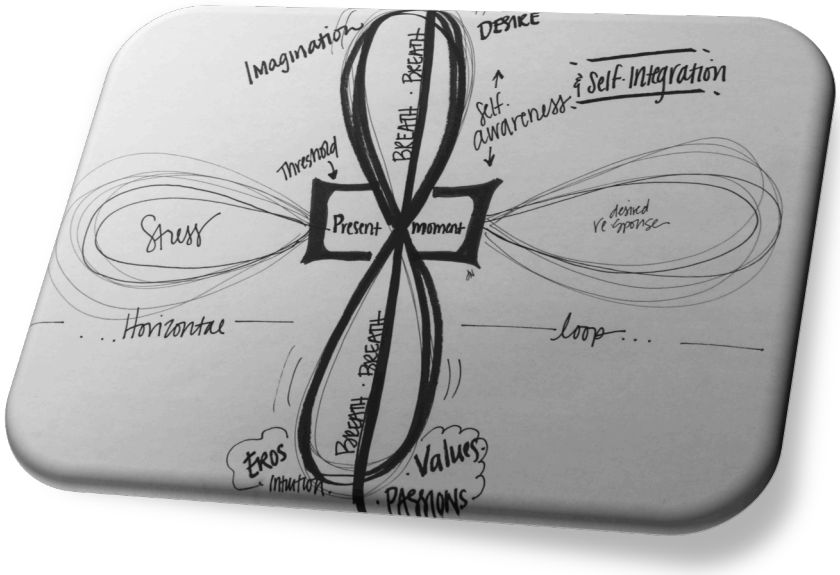

Figure 4.8 Infinite Well-Being Integration Model: Self-integration in the space between

The phenomenological material indicates that within the momentary pause created by the breath, teachers may engage the processes of integrating themselves through the stress of the profession. It may be read that the intersection point of the *Horizontal and Vertical Infinity Loops* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model* represents the liminal space where one actualizes themself in a way that is in alignment with their values and personal truths. Liminality is derived from the Latin word "limen" or boundary or threshold (Meyer & Land, 2006). The concept of liminality describes the transition through a rite of passage where the self is actualized.

"The period in which the individual is naked of self- neither fully in one category or another- is the liminal state" (Goethe, 2003 as cited in Meyer & Land, 2005). Movement through liminal spaces can be read as a reciprocal process of self de-construction and re-construction. This appears to be the space where one assumes the power and potential to transform their current perceptions of self and the world through transfiguring (through the breath) one's current emotional and perceptual state of *being*. Often times this process of expansion can feel akin to a death of self as old paradigms, beliefs, and ways of seeing that once defined the way one inter-acted with the world are deconstructed.

In the deconstruction process of dismantling limited perceptions or beliefs, one creates space to entertain new forms of consciousness or ways of *being* in the world that are in alignment with one's identity. The material in this study suggests that personal empowerment and liberation may be actualized when individuals make space to entertain new ways of seeing and *being* in the world that represent one's innate capacity for self-integration. It appears that when teachers intentionally take a conscious breath at the onset of a stressful moment, they create an internal spacious in mind, thought, and perception where they are free to see beyond their limited frame of original reference. As they enter into this liminal space, they appear to gain power and control in how they experience themselves in that moment. If "[i]ntegration results from the capacity to adapt oneself to reality plus the critical capacity to make choices and to transform that reality" (Freire, 1974, p. 4), then it becomes thinkable that when teachers engage mindful awareness, they not only adapt to the reality in which they find themselves, they

empower themselves to *be* and *become* in a way that changes the trajectory of that experience.

A central manifestation of burnout is a diminished sense of self-efficacy, which exacerbates low self-esteem. The *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model* conceptualizes the invisible, energetic process of a teacher burning-in to herself *through* moments of challenge and struggle, thus increasing her sense of power, agency, and capacity to make a positive impact in her work. When a teacher comes into present moment awareness through her breath, it appears that opens the channel to connection with her intuition, wisdom, and insight. When teachers intentionally engage the process of trusting themselves and their invisible, intuitive knowing, especially during moments of stress and dis-orientation, they appear to self-integrate and increase a felt sense of efficacy.

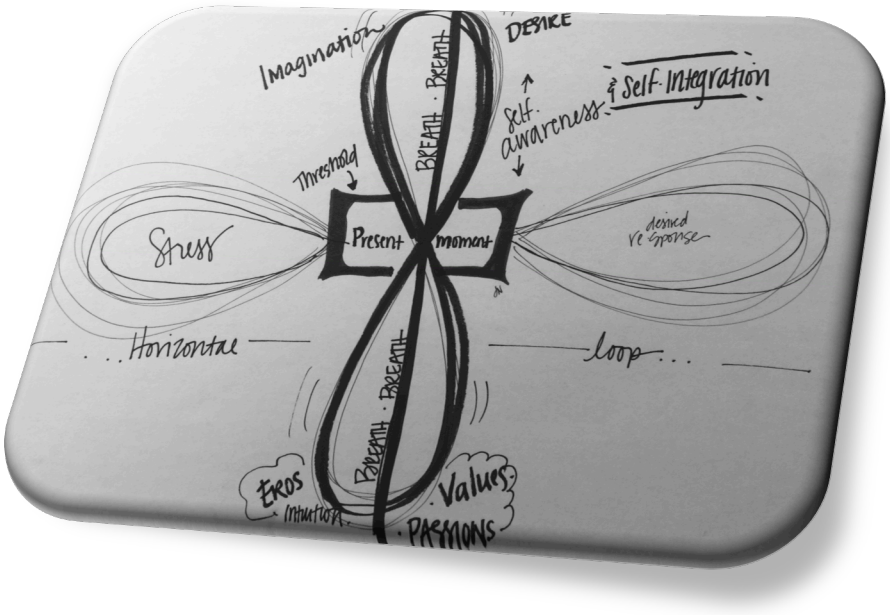

Figure 4.9 Vertical Loop of Self-Integration

This model illustrates the breath as being the plumb line or tether that brings a teacher back into the present moment and into herself when the natural stressors of the profession trigger strong emotional (i.e., shame, guilt, anger, etc.) and mental reactions (i.e., judgment, busy mind). It may be interpreted that when a teacher connects with her breath during moments of stress, she comes into greater alignment with her intuitive teacher knowing-ness. It is theorized through the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*

that attuning to one's intuition in the present moment and trusting and acting on that guidance produces the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*.

Myss (1997) says that intuition is a skill entirely based on an individual's self-esteem. "In developing your skill and trying it out in your life, however, you *must* trust your gut response" (Myss, 1997, p. 39). In his book, *Six Pillars of Self-Esteem*, Branden (1994) cites trusting intuition as being a critical component and enactment of high self-esteem. In human service oriented professions, practitioners must make countless complex, immediate, in-the-moment decisions that impact the lives of another. Trusting one's intuitive knowingness as a source of reliable information in such moments is essential. For physicians, nurses, and teachers alike, the sheer number of variables and information that must be processed and integrated "are far more than the conscious mind can handle" (Branden, 1994, p. 46).

> Complex, superrapid integrations can occur beneath conscious awareness and present themselves as 'intuitions.' A mind that has learned to trust itself is more likely to rely on this process (and manage it effectively with appropriate reality testing) than one that has not… *Intuition is significant relative to self-esteem only insofar as it expresses high sensitivity to and appropriate regard for internal signals.* (p. 46)

Connecting with the breath appears to bring one back into the body in a way that through present moment awareness, one gains access to their intuitive knowing-ness. Trusting one's self and one's intuitive insights may put an individual in direct contact with a source of knowing that invites them to move forward with actions that are in alignment with who they desire to *be* and *become* in their work. It becomes thinkable that trusting in one's self in the moment goes hand in hand with cultivating self-efficacy.

Bandura (1994) defines self-efficacy as a hallmark of personal well-being:

> People with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. Such an efficacious outlook fosters intrinsic interest and deep engrossment in activities. They set themselves challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to them. They heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure. They quickly recover their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks. (p. 1)

Self-efficacy is a positive perception of one's abilities to cope with the demands that arise in their life and professional pursuits. Self-efficacy is built and cultivated

through four primary ways (Bandura, 1994, p. 2): (1) repeated exposure to one's successes and reflection upon one's capacity, because "[s]uccess builds a robust belief in one's personal efficacy. Failure undermines it, especially if failure occurs before a sense of efficacy is firmly established;" (2) seeing other's in one's professional context succeed and thrive, because "[s]eeing people similar to oneself succeed by sustained effort raises observers' beliefs that they too possess the capabilities to master comparable activities required to succeed;" (3) social persuasion that they do have what it takes to succeed in the challenges that come their way, because "[t]o the extent that persuasive boosts in perceived self-efficacy lead people to try hard enough to succeed, they promote development of skills and a sense of personal efficacy; and (4) reframe stress as opportunities to dig deep into the self and discover their grit, tenacity, and passion to preserve, because "[t]hey interpret their stress reactions and tension as signs of vulnerability to poor performance" (Bandura, 1994, p. 3).

In *Present Teacher*™ Training sessions, teachers come into community with each other—those individuals who share similar stressors, passions, reactions, issue, concerns, successes, frustrations, and joys. The peer connection appears to provide a space for teachers to hold each other up, literally (see *Figure 4.10*) and figuratively, through the many ways Bandura (1994) cite as being integral in producing healthy self-esteem and self-efficacy. We do yoga every session in the *Present Teacher*™ Training program. During the particular yoga practice captured in *Figure 4.10*, teachers were invited to do Tree Pose. During Tree Pose, teachers are encouraged to embody a feeling of being rooted, like a tree, in their core purposes, values, and passions. They are invited to stand on one foot so they can have an embodied experience of the way balance is never a fixed nor a perfected point of stillness. Rather, this yoga pose invites them to experience the way balance is a process of micro-adjustments over time that lead an over-all sense of equilibrium. As teachers attempt to balance on one foot, I direct their attention to their wobbling ankle. I desire for them to feel the way the body seeks to constantly regain a sense of balance and stability through coming in and out of alignment over and over again. For some individuals, the wobbling is obvious as they fall out of the pose entirely and intentionally attempt to come back into the pose again. While for others, the wobbling is minuscule as their ankle and foot make almost imperceptible movements to

keep them coming into alignment. These individuals appear to not make any severe moments to the right or to the left to maintain balance, yet their body is making indiscernible adjustments the entire time. The point of this pose is two-fold; everyone's ankle is wobbling just to different extents, and the body inherently seeks and desires alignment as its natural resting point.

I believe that it is important that human service professionals know that there is never a perfected state of balance that is ever achieved and thus perfectly maintained in work or in life. Rather, I feel it is important for them to understand balance as putting your gaze on a stable focal point (i.e., knowing your values, goals, virtues, and desires that called you to your work) and rooting down into the self when you feel shaky and wobbly with an awareness that the wobbling *is* the work of coming back into alignment.

Figure 4. 10 Supported Tree Pose

This image was taken at a *Present Teacher*™ Training session when we were discussing the fundamentals of balance and self-alignment through stress. What may not be immediately visible is that when I invited teachers to do Tree Pose, I never suggested they reach out to the individual standing near them and hold hands. It appeared to intuitively happen when one teacher lost her balance and stumbled over while everyone was doing the pose independently. The teacher to her right, not even moving from

sticking her pose or shifting her gaze, instinctively reached down and grabbed this teacher's hand, drawing it back up and out, as if silently communicating, "I've got you. Come back in. You can do this. Let's do it together."

The teacher who had fallen out of the pose came right back in with effortless ease. While she came back into the pose, the two teachers came closer together, touching hips and holding each other around the waist for more stability. I simply watched and held the space with my breath as this all occurred. I did not say a word. Within seconds, the entire group of teachers grabbed for the hands of the individuals to their right and to their left. I could feel the positive pulse of energy move through the group, and I noticed smiles came across everyone's face. It felt to me that they were communicating some powerful energy through silence and their full, concentrated presence.

"A good environment allows the best things in us to manifest…. Without a community, it's harder for a person to change anything. We consume our environment as a kind of food, and its good or harmful elements seep into us" (Hanh, 2014, p. 77). Human service professionals need support, literally, figuratively, and collectively to cultivate healthy self-esteem and self-efficacy in their work.

Intuitive Resistance

While stress is an unavoidable element of any line of work, human service oriented professions have specific and unique emotional stressors that can exacerbate burnout. Burnout manifests itself as a depletion of energy in the emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical body. Moir (1990) demonstrates through the attitudinal phases of the first year of teaching, how *emotional* burnout manifests and quickly generalizes into a felt sense of disillusionment around early December and persisting through February. This is also the window, she says, where teachers get physically ill. It appears that burning out along the 4 domains (mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually) are all interconnected—when you lose energy in one area it impacts the entire balance of the intricate system of well-being in all the other areas.

As previously cited in this dissertation, emotional exhaustion is one of the three primary manifestations of burnout for human service professionals. Burning out can be seen as analogous to "losing heart." Palmer (1989) describes how the profession of teaching "tugs at the heart, opens the heart, and even breaks the heart" (p. 11). Good

teachers get emotional. Yet teachers need to learn how to navigate their emotions to be successful in their multiple teaching roles (Larrivee, 2012). Cultivating self-awareness of one's internal emotional life as well developing habits that promote self-regulation in response to strong emotional reactions are both essential capacities for human service professionals whose heart center—compassion, passion, love, care, and reverence— are central to their work.

Feeling Feelings. Emotional intelligence is an essential capacity for individuals who work on the front lines of emotionally provocative professions. Daniel Goldman (1995) acknowledges that emotional intelligence is the heart of good professional practice. Goldman (1998) has examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and effective performance and defines five core components of emotional intelligence at work: (1) self-awareness— the ability to recognize and understand one's moods and emotions; (2) self-regulation— the ability to redirect disruptive moods and to think before acting; (3) motivation— pursuing goals with energy and persistence; (4) empathy— the ability to understand the emotional makeup of others; and (5) social skills— proficiency in managing relationships and building rapport with others.

Research suggests that greater attention must be paid to the role of emotions in the formation of teacher identities and cultivation of teacher effectiveness (Day & Leitch, 2000; Reio, 2005;). Jennings and Greenberg (2009) claim:

> Socially and emotionally competent teachers set the tone of the classroom by developing supportive and encouraging relationships with their students, designing lessons that build on student strengths and abilities, establishing and implementing behavioral guidelines in ways that promote intrinsic motivation, coaching students through conflict situations, encouraging cooperation among students, and acting as a role model for respectful and appropriate communication and exhibitions of prosocial behavior. (p. 492)

Paying attention to and intentionally supporting the emotional lives of teachers and human service professionals is of critical importance. Lack of awareness of ones' emotions and knowledge of how to successfully navigate and diffuse strong emotional reactions can lead to emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion is the most consistent with relationship stress and is symptomatic of the intense interpersonal demands of teaching (Larrivee, 2012). Emotional exhaustion is defined by Wright and Cropanzano

(1998) as the "chronic state of physical and emotional depletion that results from excessive job demands and continuous hassles" (p. 486). Teachers who exhibit signs of emotional exhaustion risk becoming cynical and callous, and feeling a decreased sense of efficacy, they choose to drop out of the profession entirely (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Where there is emotional exhaustion there is lack of emotional resilience (Larrivee, 2012). Attending to the emotional dimensions of our teachers is a crucial element of both pre-service institutional education programs and continuing professional development for our in-service teachers. Emotional intelligence practices cultivate emotional resilience and emotional self-regulation. Self-awareness, the ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives as well as their effects on others (Goldman, 1998) is an essential coping skill for teachers. Given the fact that teaching is emotional labor, the strongest emotions teachers commonly experience are anger, frustration, and guilt (Larrivee, 2012). Self-regulation, the ability to control and redirect disruptive impulses and moods, to suspend judgment and think before acting (Goldman, 1998), is a core element of emotional intelligence and is a skill that can be intentionally and deliberately cultivated through practice.

Influences of Emotional Suppression and Oppression.

> Emotions are at the heart of teaching…Good teaching is charged with positive emotion… Good teachers are not just well-oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge, and joy. (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 835)

Teachers and students form deep connections and bonds through the connective tissue of emotions. Shared emotional engagement, curiosity, interest, passion, enthusiasm, and excitement bond teachers to students and students to teachers. Equally important is the emotional bond that arises when teachers and students share empathy, compassion, and reverence for each other. Emotions are embedded in the connective tissue of human service work, and the felt embodiment and expression of positive emotions can be seen as important energetic fuel that help one to burn-in to their professional calling. Equally important is an increased awareness of the ways that emotions within the work place are also a site of societal and institutional control and

oppression. This is important to consider given the inter-connected nature of emotional expression and spiritual well-being.

In this study, teachers felt that there was little to *no time* to connect on a positive emotional level with their students because they had too many tasks to accomplish. In this way, teachers described how teaching felt de-humanizing— that there was no time to cultivate the human, heart-felt connections that sustained their primary motivation to teach. Barbara shared how "institutionalized" the profession felt after a six year leave of absence to raise her children, Ruth discussed how little time there was to experience music as an art form when she felt pressured do lessons just to check off the boxes for student evaluations, and Thomas shared how his students became objects to be manipulated and controlled so he could "get through" his lessons in an attempt to get all done. It may be interpreted that as teachers feel increased pressures to perform and "do" teaching, their capacity to connect emotionally with students is significantly impacted. They may feel like there is no time or space to *be* with their students in ways that give rise to emotionally connective experiences. When there is no time to *be* because there is so much to *do*, teachers report greater dissatisfaction, disillusionment, and disconnection in their work.

Socially and institutionally, the emotional lives of professionals are a source of control and oppression. "Within education, as in the wider culture, emotions are the site of social control" (Boler, 1999, p. xvii). Boys don't cry. Teachers shouldn't show too much emotion, especially anger. Women are overly-emotional and thus, irrational. Men are emotionally detached, rational beings. "Emotional rules" are designed and serve to maintain gendered divisions and roles; they are not arbitrary. Through societal norms, the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1977), and socialization of the teacher through teacher education, a "teacher" can become an "omnipotent, all-knowing mind" (hooks, 1994, p. 138). In this regard, the teacher (especially in secondary school and at the university level) becomes the cerebral, rational, intellectual talking head—intentionally disconnected from the emotional body to maintain control of self, the space, and another. There is a distinctive mind/body split, and hooks (1994) reminds us that once we start to talk about bodies in the classroom and the ways we live in and through our bodies, "we're automatically challenging the way power has orchestrated itself in that particular

institutionalized space. The person who is most powerful has the privilege of denying their body" (p. 137).

One way a teacher can unconsciously yield oppressive power over herself and her students may be through a disconnection with her emotional body. There is an inherent contradiction between being emotional and controlling one's emotions in the teaching profession. Feminist theories actively challenge and bring into illumination the ways the institution of education seeks to privatize and pathologize the emotional life of the teacher (Boler, 1999). It is essential that teachers understand the ways in which "an emotion reflects the complex dynamics of one's lived situation" (Boler, 1999, p. 2), because this awareness helps them to better understand themselves and increase their capacity to understand another. Emotions are intricately entangled with how teachers relate to themselves, their world, and their students. If a teacher feels chronically time-starved, it is thinkable that she unwittingly feels there is no time to *be* with and process her emotional experiences— especially if her experiences evoke strong emotional reactions. In this way, it appears that organizations and institutions may unconsciously de-humanize human service oriented work through exerting excessive demands on a professional's time. If one feels there is chronically so much to *do*, one may come to harbor the unconscious belief there is no time to feel.

In the book, *Feeling Power*, Boler (1991) describes "feeling *power*" as the way our emotions reflect our complex, diverse identities as individuals situated within social hierarchies and the way emotions "'embody' and 'act out' relations of power" (pp. 3-4). In contrast, "*feeling* power" refers directly to the "*power of feeling*—a power largely untapped in Western cultures in which we learn to fear and control emotions" (p. 4). In the following excerpt, Faith appears to be exploring "feeling *power"* in the sense that she is expressing an awareness of the way connecting to her intuition about what felt right and wrong about the lesson she was told she had to teach and how the curriculum felt insulting to herself as a black woman and the children in her classroom. It can also be read that Faith is exploring "*feeling* power" in that she is articulating how even though her intuitive insight was that the required curriculum was insulting, as a first year teacher, she believed she had no agency in expressing herself, thus she had to suppress her emotional intuitiveness and "get through" the curriculum anyway.

Faith describes the curriculum she was expected to teach during Black History Month. She explains how in she was instructed to teach about Martin Luther King Jr. to her first graders through a curriculum that projected him as, in her words, "a little king." I asked her to explain to me what she felt about this; what she felt about the way she believed he was being presented to children. Faith said, "It felt disrespectful always making the black man a child. He is always seen as a boy and never a man. He was a cartoon character." Faith proceeded to tell me about how she felt that her students needed to see images of Martin Luther King Jr. as a man who has persevered through great struggles, because she felt that her students could personally relate to that.

As Faith and I talked more about why she felt she did not have the power to self-advocate in response to her emotional intuition, she went on to explain that she felt disconnected from herself in her teaching. She expressed that teaching felt like a performance where you followed the scripted curriculum in the exact manner it was presented. As a first year teacher, she believed that she did not have any authority to modify the lesson in a way that fit the emotional, intellectual, and psycho-spiritual needs of her particular students. She said:

> That has been my biggest struggle; having the lessons already done. I really struggle because sometimes it goes in a direction you wouldn't go in. I have a really chatty bunch… they love making connections. I wish there was more time for that because that is developing them and growing them emotionally because all the conversations are always about persevering and overcoming. Whatever they bring up they like to hear about preserving and overcoming… I want to say to them, 'You have gone through more that grown people and look at you!'… but that takes a lot of time away from the curriculum.

It appears in this excerpt that Faith is experiencing the lived contradiction teachers often feel when attempting to honor the demands of the curriculum while creating the necessary space for students to emotionally connect to their learning and teachers to emotionally connect with her students. In the middle of this contradiction, teachers often feel tugged to "do" and "get through" their teaching, thus neglecting to listen to their emotionally intuitive guidance that would allow one to engage pedagogical tact. Van Manen (2015) says that tactful teaching is always "contingent, immediate, situational,

and improvisational. And tact as a form of human interacting means that we are in a thinkingly active manner in a situation: emotionally, responsively, thoughtfully" (p. 82).

Faith's retelling of this experience provides a space for her to process her rising awareness of the ways she feels powerless to act on her emotional intuitiveness as a novice teacher. It may be read that Faith did not feel any emotional agency to make executive decisions in the moment, and because of this felt lack of power, it diminished her *Presence* as a teacher. Faith reflected, "You just need to have a piece of yourself in it to teach it, I think." It feels like Faith is also powerfully conveying that if you lose yourself from disconnecting from your emotional intuitiveness in your teaching, it impacts how you are *being* and who you are *becoming*. For Faith, it may be read that her capacity for *being* fully present and connected to the moment, her intuition, and the pathic (i.e., empathic/ sympathetic) dimension of her work were suppressed because she felt she had no time to engage her own and her students' emotional experiences. In terms of the cultivation of *teacher Presence*, it is thinkable that if teachers embody the belief that "doing" teaching and getting through scripted curriculum trumps *being* with students in ways that engage pedagogical intuitiveness and emotional responsiveness, their spiritual well-*being*-ness[17] and self-actualization is significantly arrested.

Our emotions speak to us through felt sensations in the body, and it may be read through the phenomenological material in this study that emotions are messengers and essential assistants in the perpetual process of *being* and *becoming* a teacher.

> When we live outside of ourselves, and by that I mean on external directives only rather than from our internal knowledge and needs, when we live away from the erotic guides from within ourselves, then our lives are limited by external and alien forms, and we conform to the needs of a structure that is not based on human need let alone an individual's. (Lorde, 1984, p. 58)

When we disconnect from our innate emotional lived experiences, we may, in effect, renounce and reject our very own selves—inflicting the worst kind of violence upon ourselves. And what we do unto ourselves, we do unto others.

> When I follow only the oughts, I many find myself doing work that is ethically laudable but that is not mine to do. A vocation that is not mine,

[17] Spiritual well-*being*-ness refers to the strength of the connection a teacher feels with herself and her capacity to express her true self in her teaching.

> no matter how externally valued, does violence to the self—in the precise sense that it *violates* my identity and integrity on behalf of some abstract norm. When I violate myself, I invariably end up violating the people I work with. (Palmer, 1997, p. 19)

Flowing out of the moment that Faith shared about feeling powerless in engaging the Martin Luther Kind Jr. curriculum in a way that was responsive and respectful to her emotional intuition as a professional educator, woman of color, and the needs of her students, she discussed another experience self-abnegation in her teaching. In this moment, Faith shares how during an observation, she felt the pressure to neglect doing what she felt was right so to default to assuming the expected of role "teacher" and the way this disconnection from herself manifested in chaos in her classroom:

> During one of my observations, one of my kids had not slept and another whose mom was supposed to visit her last night didn't show up. She was devastated the day of my observation. They were all off. I couldn't figure it out. 'I better keep moving,' I thought. I couldn't get a kid out from under a table. So I finally said, 'Everyone back to their seats and put your heads down.' I was not sure what was going on here, but we needed to have a do-over. I was shaken, and you could tell in my observation. I forgot a ton of things to do. I forgot to read the learning target. I abandoned my plan, and it looked like I wasn't planned. It wasn't that at all. My principal never came back to observe me.

Faith continued to tell me about another moment in that observation where she describes how in not listening to her emotional intuition, because she felt she should look more like a teacher, she disconnected from herself in a way that her students sensed:

> Instead of allowing the next student in line to run the morning meeting, I felt pressure to call on someone. I picked someone who wasn't strong that day. I am usually in tune with my kids, but I just wanted this to go off nicely and smoothly. I am usually always trying to pay attention to what I am sensing from them. If I had been myself, I would have noticed that Sam was out of control, and she came in defeated because she didn't see her mom last night. A boy who has seen a lot of abuse just came in and put his head down and went to sleep. Normally, I would have just done something different and let him be. When I start making these changes to look good, the kids know. They know something is wrong. I just abandoned who I was…. I don't know… I wasn't myself. I wasn't present. I overlooked putting a girl who wasn't at her best that day to be the leader. It blew up. I blew it up.

In this excerpt, Faith illuminates how neglecting to listen to her intuitive insight regarding the emotional cues she was picking up from students resulted in a felt sense of disconnect between both herself and her students and her connection to herself. It appears in this moment that the pressure Faith felt to perform and enact the role of "teacher" during an observation by her administrator created a domino effect of subsequent moments of disconnection and self-abnegation. Faith's desire to look like the perfect teacher and for things to "go off nicely and smoothly" may be read as creating significant interference with her ability to attune to her intuitive emotional cuing system as well as trust herself in acting in alignment with this intuitive information.

It is also significant to note the way Faith internalizes this teaching moment when she says, "It blew up. I blew it up." It appears that she makes an immediate leap in internalizing the external events of the lesson as a personal failure. It becomes thinkable that if teachers equate "failures" in their teaching to a perceived inadequacy in the self that they may internalize a sense of shame and/or guilt that further exacerbates a sense of self-abnegation that may linger in their emotional bodies, doing silent yet significant damage to their spiritual well-*being*-ness over time. "Shame is the fear of disconnection. We are psychologically, emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually hardwired for connection, love, and belonging" says Brown (2012, p. 68). When teachers associate "failures" in teaching that result from responding to the intense pressure to "do" teaching in a systematic, lock-step fashion, it becomes thinkable that they unknowingly internalize a false interpretation of their inherent capacities. It becomes thinkable that when feeling pressured to *do* all there is to do as a teacher in the 21st Century, their professional agency and power is repressed; the agency and power to *take the time* to make emotional connections to their students and their very own intuition that allow them to *feel* and *be* successful and competent in their role.

For individuals in the helping (e.g., teachers, counselors, school nurses, etc.) and healing professions, (e.g., physicians, nurses, therapists, etc.), *feeling* emotion and connecting emotionally with the individuals one is called to serve is interconnected with one's overall sense of effectiveness and well-*being*. "Developing emotional muscles is the work of the soul….we need emotional muscles to rise up emotionally. It is the finding of our true selves" (Williamson, 2016, p. 7). While burnout can be conceptualized as

feeling too much, or perhaps, feeling in ways that exacerbate emotions that split the person from themselves, burning "in to" the profession can be conceptualized as leveraging emotional reactions as an opportunity for increased self-awareness and self-assertiveness. Emotions are always embodied in the present moment, thus if acknowledged and felt, they may invite us into ourselves in a deep and connective way. Our emotions are messengers and essential assistants in our self-awareness work. They bubble up in the present moment as in indicator of something within us that needs to be seen, explored, and expressed.

"Emotions function in part as moral and ethical evaluations; they give us information about what we care about and why" (Boler, 1999, p. xviii). When we deny the feeling and expression of our emotions, we deny our connection with our spiritual selves. In effect, we unconsciously oppress our true selves. Strong emotional reactions that are entangled with the emotional labor required of teachers, if not met with a conscious, compassionate, and nonjudgmental inner awareness, can morph into violence on the self.

If burnout is a symptomatic result that manifests through one's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual being-ness due to a mis-alignment with one's self and one's emotions, then exploring a holistic well-being conceptualization that takes into account both conventional and spiritual healing traditions feels intuitive. Brennan (1993), a healer, therapist, and scientist, says:

> From a deeper perspective, illness is caused by unfilled longing. The deeper the illness, the deeper the longing. It is a message that somehow, somewhere, you have forgotten who you are and what your purpose is. You have forgotten and disconnected from the purpose of your creative energy from your core. Your illness is the symptom: The disease represents your unfulfilled longing. (p. 12)

Brennan's words resonate with Hunt's (1989) claim that spiritual and psychic healers place emphasis on healing the soul when it becomes mis-aligned or "off-track." "They believe the source of all illness is forgetting who we are" (Hunt, 1989, p. 244). For Hunt, the best way to conceptualize or describe the nature and process of healing refers to the deliberate alignment of the "activation of the bodies energies toward dynamic equilibrium, growth, and evolution" (p. 244).

Being emotional and feeling one's feelings appears to be a powerful and necessary element of inner transformational work. If we do not create the space or feel we have the time, agency, or capacity to go inward and explore with critical awareness the ways our own emotions have been manipulated, oppressed, and degraded for others to maintain power and control, we will not be able to heal these repressed emotions and transform our thinking in a way that gives rise to our own inner empowerment.

During an interview, I asked Faith to tell me about what she feels she did well as a teacher in her first year of teaching. My intention was to create the space for her to witness through deliberate awareness her innate capacity to *be* and *become* the teacher she imagines herself to be. She was most proud of creating moments of emotional and heart-felt connection with her students. She told me about a "mentally ill" student of hers who often said how much he hated school and had told her at the end of the year that he "used" to hate school. It is interesting how she immediately followed up this point of pride in her psycho-spiritual work as a teacher by saying that she wished her students made more visible progress on the standardized tests to show growth. In this moment, I contend that Faith is grappling with the tension between feeling that she really did make a difference this year in the lives of her students but that making a difference is not a visible, easily quantifiable, or measurable contribution. Faith then reflected:

> I know my kids feel totally safe here. I've demonstrated that I would protect them like their mama would. I see how they are being good and kind to each other. They are responsible for each other. It feels safe here. There haven't been any fights. No other teacher can say that. But I don't feel valuable.

Faith's psycho-spiritual success— creating a space for students to feel safe, seen, and protected in being themselves and making emotional impacts on her students' lives— is not tangible. It is interesting to note how Faith appears to be suspended within the liminal space of the contradiction she feels between having made a profound difference in her students' lives and not feeling valuable. It may be inferred that due to the nature of the observations and evaluation measures that Faith has experience with, the pathic impact she has on her students is not perceived as valid or valued. Given this phenomenological material, I assert that if human service professionals do not feel that their pathic, heart-centered contributions (e.g., empathy, compassion, acceptance,

presence, love, etc.) have any value or worth (i.e., since they cannot be easily quantified and visibly measured), that they may internalize this lack of validation in a personal way that is corrosive to their sense of self.

A negative feeling towards one's self, another, and doubt in one's capacity (Awa, Plaumann, & Walter, 2008) are hallmarks of burnout. Given this insight, one might imagine that the individual practitioner may need to *become* the one who provides the validation they seek. Through intentional acts of mindful awareness, self-compassion, self-acceptance, self-love, and feelings one's feelings, the individual practitioner *becomes* their own power source for the validation, recognition, and reverence they desire and deserve.

Self-Love and Self-Care as Intuitive Resistance. "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare (Lorde, 1988). Self-care in the healing and helping professions is not a luxury; it is a professional responsibility. The practitioner is the instrument (Kreitzer & Koithan, 2014). This instrument must be tuned, well-functioning, and healthy so that she can do her job effectively. That job requires the capacity for the communication of high levels of compassion, care, patience, acceptance, and love. As Lorde (1998) powerfully conveys in her quote, self-care, love, and attention on the self is not self-indulgence; it is powerful act of self-preservation. For those called to the healing and helping professions, self-preservation is paramount. As the phenomenological material in this study illuminates, when a human service professional loses touch with their Eros (i.e., passion), emotions, intuitive insights, and sense of self, they lose the heart and soul of their *being*-ness that animates their work.

Burnout is the manifestation of a slow process of self dis-integration that goes unrecognized and untreated. Self-care becomes an act of political warfare when we socially, professionally, and institutionally value the reality that a teacher's health, vitality, and well-being and acknowledge these to be necessary elements of her capacity to self-actualize and *become* the healing and healthy *presence* that is demanded of her in her work. O'Donohue (1997) reminds us that there is an uncanny symmetry with how one is in relationship with one's self and how one is in relationship with another. Given this insight, it becomes thinkable that when the stressors of the profession outweigh her

capacity to cope, either because the external forces are beyond her control and/or she has not been provided with the proper sources of support, not only is her relationship with herself at great risk for corrosion, her relationships with her students are also put at risk.

"To work for peace and justice we begin with the individual practice of love, because it is there that we can experience firsthand love's transformative power" (hooks, 2016, online para. 18). For hook's (2016), the practice of love is the single most powerful and profound antidote to oppression and domination. For "if we grow into our adult years without knowing how to love, how then can we create social movements that will end domination, exploitation, and oppression?" (hooks, 2016). Self-love is our practice of learning *how* to love; how to turn love's most powerful and profound energy inward onto the self. Self-love, however, takes time, conscious attention, and deliberate practice. Self-love is an action and maintaining this relationship to and with the self requires consistent attention.

Love is a by-product of actions like care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect, and trust. In *How To Love*, Hanh (2015) says that the essential characteristics that lead to the by-product felt-ness and embodiment of love are: loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. Self-love and self-care are conceptualize in the *Vertical Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model* as the very act of creating space in one's personal and professional livelihood to align with their breath so to connect to themselves to their infinite passion, purpose, intuition, and desires. In effect, catching one's breath, and taking one simple moment to intentionally and consciously rest the mind and body in pure awareness of that moment, is an act of self-love and self-connection. Moments of self-connection need not be long to be effective. For instance, many teachers in this study report the immediate mental, emotional, and physical benefits of noticing their breath in moments of their teaching when they felt agitated, overwhelmed, or emotionally reactive. Noticing one's internal world and taking a moment to self-regulate through the breath is a profound moment of self-validation and self-recognition. It is simple act of self-care because in this moment, the teacher enables herself to take action in alignment with her needs and desires for who and how she desires to *be*. In moments of conscious self-recognition, a teacher cultivates trust in her emotional cues and intuitive insights.

"Intuition is, first of all, an expression of power" (Myss, 2004, pp. 17-18). It can be read through the phenomenological material in this study, that when teachers align with the *Vertical Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*, they access their personal power through feeling their feelings and attuning to their intuitive knowing. Connecting with the self through nonjudgmental awareness, which the breath creates the space for, appears to create the conditions for a teacher to *feel felt* by their very own selves as well as gain clear insight into how to move forward in one's work from a heart-centered, self-integrated spaciousness.

Figure 4.11 Intuitive Resistance and the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*

A primary manifestation of the burnout epidemic is a diminished sense of self-efficacy and, by extension, low self-esteem. hooks (1990) illustrates the interconnected nature of self-love and self-esteem when she says, "[t]he wounded heart learns self-love by first overcoming low self-esteem" (p. 55). Self-esteem is an umbrella term that represents the integration of self-acceptance, self-responsibility, self-assertiveness, and living with integrity (Branden, 1994). Integrity is often defined as one's actions arising from an undivided selfhood. Palmer (1997) describes integrity as finding a sense of

wholeness in the self through integrating all the different forces and factors that requires one to discern what is integral to one's selfhood. He says, "[b]y choosing integrity, I become more whole, but wholeness does not mean perfection. It means I am becoming more real by acknowledging the whole of who I am" (Palmer, 1997, p. 17). The *Vertical Infinity Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model* is a visual representation of leveraging the forces and factors that intersect in one's life and integrating these external experiences through a grounding down into the emotional self so the individual can metabolize the experience in a personally meaningful way that increases self-awareness, self-believe, self-trust, and self-esteem.

Genuine self-esteem is what we feel about ourselves when everything is not all right, says Branden (1994). Self-esteem is a perpetual process of cultivating self-trust "when we are challenged by the unexpected, when others disagree with us, when we are flung back on our own resources, when the cocoon of the group can no longer insulate us from the tasks and risks of life, when we must think, choose, decide, and act *and no one is guiding us or applauding us.* At such moments our deepest premises reveal themselves" (Branden, 1994, p. 300). The *Vertical Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model* is meant to visually represent this coming into alignment with the self through the breath in such a way that we become the providers of the love, validation, and compassionate care we are seeking from external sources. In that moment of connecting with the breath, feeling our feelings, and attuning to our intuition, we *become* love, compassion, and care because we are extending it to ourselves when no one else is guiding or applauding us. Through this alignment with breath, moment, and self, it is inferred that we tap into an infinite power source of love, commitment, and desire. This connection to this place within our selves is what Lordes (2007) calls the Erotic, and it is the source of what is conceptualized in this work as *intuitive resistance*.

Intuitive resistance appears through this phenomenological research to be an embodiment of self-love, self-protection, self-respect, and self-reverence turned inwardly through self-trust that then has the pure potential to be multiplied and extended outwardly through acts of radical love and compassionate care. *Intuitive resistance* is produced in this work as a manifestation of an alignment with the Erotic/ "eros" (e.g., *Vertical Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*). Audre Lorde (2007) and bell hooks (1994)

advocate for a more expansive and deeper understanding of "eros" or the erotic as a "passionate and transformative love of self and others" (Kennedy & Grinter, 2013, p. 48) and not merely a sexual kind of love. Lorde (1984) says that the word *erotic* comes from the Greek word *eros* and is the personification of love in all aspects. "When I speak of the erotic, then, I speak of it as an assertion of the lifeforce of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work, our lives" (p. 89). This is a profound articulation of love as a universal life force—a powerful, creative, spiritual energy. It may be read that these moments when teachers come to their breath, they connect deeply with their spirit-selves and created a micro-miracle moment of healing through belonging fully to themselves. "One of the biggest lies we were ever told is that it is 'easy' to be selfish and that self-sacrifice takes spiritual strength. People sacrifice themselves in a thousand ways every day. This is their tragedy. To honor the self— to honor mind, judgment, values, and conviction— is the ultimate act of courage. Observe how rare it is. But it is what self-esteem asks of us" (Branden, 1994, p. 301).

In Six Pillars of Self-Esteem, Branden (1994) describes the way self-esteem is affected by the cultures in which we live, work, and play:

> Every human being, whatever the network of customs and values in which he or she grows up, is obligated to act to satisfy and fulfill basic needs. We do not always and automatically feel competent in facing this challenge. Yet all human beings need the experience of competence (which I call self-efficacy) if they are to possess a fundamental sense of security and empowerment….To the extent that a culture suppresses the natural impulse to self-assertion and self-expression, it blocks creativity, stifles individuality, and sets itself against the requirements of self-esteem. (pp. 278-281)

Faith appears to find her inner power as she processes through her experiences of her feelings in moments when she knew she was self-abnegating and denying listening to her emotional intuition. She says, "I know I could have been a decent or better teacher if I was a valuable member of my team." Faith then describes how during emotional times with her teammates in planning meetings, she would intentionally "drop in on herself" and look at situations "from up above," she said. I asked her to tell me more about what she was doing in these moments when she would, in her words, "drop in on herself" or

see situations "from up above." Faith described how during a very emotional situation where she felt misunderstood and misperceived by her administrator that she felt like she had her "consciousness on her shoulder" and that she "tapped into some inner wisdom because she was dying to share and have someone acknowledge what was happening." She said, "I was going into what I was feeling…beyond ashamed. Beyond demoralized. I needed to protect myself. My spirit told me to. The thing that came through loud and clear in that moment was, 'Faith, you are desperate. Don't do it.'"

I contend that in this moment of what appears to be heightened self-awareness and connection with her inner voice or intuitive knowing, Faith connects to her personal power source through feeling her feelings and self-protecting in a moment she feels vulnerable in expressing herself. Myss (1997) says that a way to regain power is through placing value on our own impressions as opposed to seeking validation through the opinions or affirmations of another. "Clear intuition requires the ability to respect your own impressions. If you need another person to validate your own impressions, you interfere with your ability to intuit" (p. 52). Not only does this process of trusting one's intuition appear to allow access to an internal energetic power source where one can feel confident in their knowing what is true for them, they also may engage in healing in those very same moments.

I believe that in this moment, when Faith consciously chose to respect her intuitive impressions when she felt vulnerable, emotionally exposed, and potentially misunderstood, she engaged a powerful form of *intuitive resistance* through staying silent. It may also be read that in this moment of conscious action to remain silent and self-protect, in listening to her intuition and allowing it to guide her "in-action," Faith deepened her relationship with herself through honoring her feelings and intuitive impressions. The invisible inward ripple effect of self-love and self-respect, I suspect, can go very deep.

For Barbara, *intuitive resistance* is made manifest and visible in a very public and profound way that has an external ripple effect on the educational system in which she works, herself, and the students in her care. I am reading Barbara's phenomenological material as a moment when a teacher engaged the process of energetically moving through the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*, leveraging a "dis-orienting" dilemma

that triggered an intense emotional response (e.g., traversing the left loop of *Horizontal Infinity Loop)* as an opportunity to feel all her emotions and ground her emotional energy down through her values and virtues and up through her imagination of who she desires to be as teacher (i.e., traversing the *Vertical Infinity Loop*) so to intuitively resist a demoralizing and dehumanizing situation from a place of fierce love for herself and her students.

Figure 4.12 Infinite Well-Being Integration Model: Intuitive Resistance

Barbara shared this moment with me via email after our last session in our academic year long *Present Teacher* Training program at her school. It was an unsolicited piece of experiential processing that I immediately found provocative. I asked special permission to use her experience as a source of phenomenological material, and she immediately agreed:

> Hi Jennifer— I wanted to share with you an experience I've had at school that has resulted in a series of successes that I attribute, in part, to my more mindful approach this year.

Barbara went on to described how she has a music class with two severely autistic students, a student which extreme ADHD, and a child with severe mental illness. The particular student with the mental illness, Barbara said, was violent, unpredictable, and volatile, often lashing out, physically, at peers and adults. This child was recently diagnosed in kindergarten with schizophrenia. Barbara said:

> This class terrified me from the first day… I was struggling with them from day one and wrote my first email to the principal before the end of September asking, at the very least, for an ESP for the autistic girl. As a mother, I couldn't bear having this girl being so upset, crying, and unable to communicate. As a teacher, having the crying on top of all the other behaviors was more than I could stand. I felt badly that I could not give this girl my attention because there were so many other problems, some of them dangerous that were demanding my attention. There was very little learning going on in this class. I was angry, and I felt like a failure.

In this moment of emotional acknowledgement, Barbara appears to be feeling into her emotions and modeling a core element of emotional intelligence and mindfulness—increased self-awareness.

> For the past six months, I have felt like my mindfulness training has been solely responsible for maintaining my sanity with this particular class. I would recite my mantra before they came into my room: 'I will be patient. I will love them. I will breathe.' Sometimes it helped. Sometimes it wasn't enough. Most of the time *I felt like I wasn't enough* (emphasis original).

It is important to pause here and be with the moment where Barbara says that she felt a deep connection between not feeling like whatever she *did* was not enough and how this made her feel that *she* was not enough. This is a critical invisible element to illuminate, because central to burnout is a diminished sense of self-efficacy. In this context, given the severity of the mental, emotional, and physical needs of the 4 students in her room combined with the needs of the other 19 students in her care, Barbara equated not being able to manage all the professional responsibilities and expectations of this classroom as a *personal* failing and appears to have internalized a profound feeling of not-enough-ness as a person. Given this phenomenological material, I contend that teachers may unconsciously equate *doing* enough and *getting through* enough in their teaching with *being* enough as a human being (Hughes-Decatur, 2011).

Barbara goes on to share how the intensity of this moment culminated when the child diagnosed with schizophrenia punched her in the middle of class. She describes the inner emotional tension and contradiction she experienced when she felt she had to remain calm and controlled on the outside when her assistant principal arrived to help while inside she was seething with many different emotions:

> When I called for help, the girl was hiding behind a shelf. I had to keep teaching and things looked calm. I was seething on the inside and felt like

> crying, though the girl hadn't hurt me, I was angry and felt like I needed a break. My brain was going a million miles an hour but I remained calm and professional in front of my students. Because of this, the assistant principal didn't feel this was a big issue. I felt like they didn't care. This was my breaking point.

It is important to pause here to notice the nuanced way that power over emotions is playing out in this space. It may be read that in a moment where she felt she had to look calm and in control of everything as the (female) professional teacher, Barbara felt the tension between having to put on a good face and not show any emotionality (even though she was just physically hit by student) when her (male) administrator arrived.

Boler (1999) reminds us how "emotions are 'political' in several senses: Within Western cultures, for example, it has served the interests of patriarchy and capitalism to view women as naturally nurturing and caring, and also tending to over-emotionality that justifies their exclusion from the rational polis" (p. 7). Education, as a social institution is designed to serve the interests of the nation/ state and not the individual in order to maintain the status quo and social order (Boler, 1999). With this awareness, Boler (1999) asserts that emotions as a source of personal power is an under-explored source of transformation and resistance. This phenomenological study, and this material in particular, demonstrate how tapping into the emotion of self-love, self-respect, and self-care can become, like Lorde (1988) suggests, and act of political warfare (i.e., intuitive resistance). Barbara wrote:

> We had just had our mindfulness session on self-love. I felt that I had been asking for help for six months. I had been feeling inadequate for six months. I had been failing for six months… I deserved better. The class had been falling behind all of my other ones, and I have been walking on egg shells and putting out fires for six months. I deserved better. My students deserved better.

I read this moment of listening to her intuition and connecting with her eros as Barbara invisibly traversing the *Vertical Horizontal Loop* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model* and integrating deeply into herself through what she knows she deserves so to enable herself to *become* the teacher she desires to be. She appears to be aligning with her power through *feeling* and expressing her emotions by tapping into her core values and erotic energy— the "resource within each of us that lies… firmly rooted

in the power of our unexpressed or unrecognized feelings… the beginnings of our sense of self and the chaos of our strongest feelings" (Lorde, 1984, pp. 53-54). Barbara describes the events that transpired after feeling all her emotions and allowing them to guide her actions when she wrote an email to her administrators, union representative, and the union.

> My union rep was there when I told him that I needed help and my students deserved to have me at my best. More importantly, I looked my principal in the eye and told that the administration had let me down. No one bothered to acknowledge my pain. I hate crying at work, but I was proud of myself for making sure I was heard, even if it meant I might not be able to keep my emotions in check.

I am reading this as a moment of *intuitive resistance* where Barbara deeply connected with her pain, anger, and frustration through an act of self-recognition and self-love that produced a powerful space for her to claim the opportunities and support that she and her students deserved. This connection to her emotionality appears to have created an opportunity for her to use her strong (often labeled as "negative") emotions to push back, be heard, and communicate her sense of value and worth as a teacher even if it meant being emotional at work. In fact, in this moment of what is being read as *intuitive resistance,* Barbara displays strength in feeling all her emotions and courage to connect with eros; that primal passion and love energy that often emerges *through* the feelings of anger and frustration.

> In touch with the erotic, I became less willing to accept powerlessness, or those supplied states of being which are not native to me, such as resignation, despair, self-effacement, depression, self-denial…In order to be utilized, our erotic feelings must be recognized. (Lorde, 1987, p. 58)

It may be read that Barbara was embodying, *through* intuitive resistance, a powerful emotional act of social justice teaching called critical emotional praxis. Chubbuck and Zembylas (2008) define *socially just teaching* "as a teacher's effort to transform policies and enact pedagogies that improve the learning and life opportunities of typically underserved students (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994) while equipping and empowering them to work for a more socially just society themselves" (p. 274) (Freire, 1955/1970; Kincheloe & Sternberg, 1998; King, 2005).

As powerful forces in teaching, emotions and emotional management demand attention from educators and educational researchers, because "existing research shows how teachers are constantly engaged in emotional management processes, often with serious implications not only for their emotional health but also for their professional effectiveness" (Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2008, p. 277). Emotions are not just part of the private internal terrain of a teacher's professional life. Rather, they are mutually constitutive forces that "(trans)form individuals, social interactions, and power relations" (Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2008, p. 277).

The health of the emotional lives of our nation's educators is a critical element of their overall personal well-b*eing*-ness and professional effectiveness. Like Chubbuck and Zembylas (2008) suggest, emotions become the nexus point where the public and private meet. The external experiences that teachers encounter in their line of heart-centered, emotionally provocative work influence their inner personal landscapes. Becoming emotionally intelligent and agile is a necessary professional attribute of teachers. When teachers are encouraged and supported in being in touch with their inner emotional experiences to external events in their teaching, they are invited to cultivate self-trust and self-acknowledgement. Courageously engaging with and expressing their inner emotional selfhood is a profound act of self-care. Lorde (1987) reminds us how critical it is to be in touch with self-care as an act of political warfare, because when we live outside of ourselves, "and by that I mean on external directives only rather than from our internal knowledge and needs… our lives [become] limited by external and alien forms, and we conform to the needs of a structure that is not based on human need, let alone the individuals" (p. 58).

Emotions as a site of political control can also be seen in other institutional settings like the health care system. "In a patriarchal and capitalist culture, we learn emotional rules that help maintain our society's particular hierarchies of gender, race, and class" (Boler, 199, p. xxi). Externally-based emotional rules or norms may be an insidious element of health practitioner burnout. In the medical field, there is a "historical tendency of the profession to ignore indicators of distress…. The culture of the medical profession has been recognized as a key factor that might deter doctors from taking care of themselves" (Wallace et al., 2009, pp. 1715-1716; Baldisseri, 2007). For example,

predictors of physician wellness include personality traits and gender. Physicians with personality traits that lean toward perfectionism, workaholism, and type A personality traits are associated with a greater risk and propensity toward burnout, depression, eating disorders, and generalized anxiety (Wallace et. al, 2009). Female physicians appear to be at a higher risk for burnout due to the fact that they are balancing work and family responsibilities that tend to exacerbate personal and professional emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual stress (Robinson, 2003; Wallace et. al, 2009). In addition, Robinson (2003) illuminates the gender discrimination in female physician work, called "micro-inequities," that arise from insidious unrecognized attitudes that systematically work against women physicians (Committee on Women Faculty in the School of Science, 1999). "Although overt signs of discrimination may be less common, they have been replaced by a variety of 'micro-inequities,' events that occur on an individual level of decision making and involve unjust and irrational treatment based on sex" (Robinson, 2003, p. 181; Rowe, 1990).

Wallace et al. (2009) cite a "conspiracy of silence" where physicians rely on denial and avoidance as their primary coping strategies for stress (Baldisseri 2007; Firth-Cozens, 2001). Avoidance in talking about their mental, emotional, and physical ill-health appears to be linked to a perceived stigma associated with seeking help for health care professionals (Wallace et. al, 2009). "In a study of physicians' attitudes towards their own health, Thompson and colleagues identified that general practitioners feel pressure from both their patients and colleagues to appear physically well, even when they are sick, because they believe their health is interpreted as an indicator of their medical competence" (Wallace et. al, 2009, p. 1716; Thompson et. al, 2001). This sentiment resonates with the phenomenological material by Faith and Barbara when they felt pressure to look calm, cool, and in control as they assumed the position of a perfectly composed teacher while being observed by administration, yet in their bodies there was significant emotional turmoil and unease "seething," as Barbara said, under the calm, cool, and collected demeanor.

Research also indicates that, institutionally, there is a discrimination against physicians who seek help for their mental, emotional, and physical distress even if their diagnosis has proven to have no ill effect on their professional practice (Center, et al.,

2003; Schroeder et al., 2009; Wallace et. al, 2009; Worley, 2008). Licensing applications ask about their physical, mental, and emotional health, and some licensing boards will investigate a physician seeking treatment. "The idea that physicians fear damaging their careers or putting their medical license in jeopardy if they seek treatment for such problems is gradually receiving increased attention" (Wallace et. al, 2009, p. 1716). The overall mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual health and well-*being*-ness of our human service professionals requires that we begin to illuminate the ways in which institutional practices, norms, and cultural expectations undermine practitioner self-care. Human service oriented professions rely on the health of the interior life of the person in the role. In this way, the cultivation of self-integration, self-expression, self-love, and self-care is a critical element of practitioner vitality and effectiveness and may, as this research suggests, produce macro-miracle moments of healing, love, and compassionate care.

Provocation #1: …Leveraging "disorienting dilemmas" as sacred stress opportunities may provoke…
Provocation #2: … the Cultivation of self-integration and intuitive resistance that may provoke…
Provocation #3: …the Creation of the Macro-Miracle Moment.

"When you are being controlled, you are treated as an object rather than as a subject" (O'Donohue, 1997, p. 139). It appears through an excavation of the research on burnout in the human service professions that there is an implicit curriculum of de-humanization of the professional operating in significant and profound ways. It may be interpreted through the phenomenological material in this study in conjunction with the insights gleaned from the research on educator and health care provider burnout that external forces and factors influenced by bureaucratic control and standardization may exacerbate a feeling of de-humanization of the human service professional.

O'Donohue (1999) cautions that "[y]ou should never belong fully to something that is outside yourself. It is very important to find balance in your belonging. You should never belong totally to any cause or system" (p. 144). While the manifestations and contexts of stress for human services professionals differs across roles (e.g., nursing,

teaching, etc.) and institutional contexts (e.g., education, health care, etc.), the generalized core of "stress" appears to contribute to a felt-ness of loss of control; a felt sense of an inability to manage the unending demands coming from external sources with the internal coping capacity of the individual. It becomes apparent through the phenomenological material in this study that teachers feel like they have very little control, professional agency, and influence the *be* the teacher they both desire to be and know to be necessary to positively influence student learning.

The exploration of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* in this study has produced a promise of well-*being*-ness that can be accessed amidst the fast-paced setting of human service oriented work where being busy has become the norm and expectation. What has been produced through this study is that it becomes imaginable that no one person, experience, or thing can take away one's ability to control their state of *being*-ness in the present moment. Dreyer et al. (2018) discovered that when nurses *became* present in the moment, they could create a slow gap in the fast paced doing to create a space where they could be fully present for themselves and their patients in a way that allowed for a regaining of professional control and integrity in one's work. "Despite being in a setting where the objective time measure dominates, the nurse can create a rhythm of her own in the room" (Dreyer et al., 2018, p. 37). It appears though this study that this is and *can be* the case for teachers, too.

Mindfulness is a practice that invites us into inhabiting our full, unapologetic, *being*-ness in the present moment. It appears that no matter how fast time feels in our classrooms and care clinics, no matter how much there is to *do* coming down the pike, we have ultimate control; control over how we are *being* and who we are *becoming* in the moment; control over how we choose to integrate the experiences we engage in our professional practices. "When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves" (Frankl, 1985, p. 112). Mindful awareness appears to enable us with this point of internal power.

The Macro-Miracle Moment- Radiating Radical Love and Compassionate Care through *Presence*

The term "micro-miracle moment" was produced from the phenomenological material in this study to represent those moments in one's teaching when one was able to

slip out of the busy-mode-of-*doing* and *be* with one's self and one's students in a way that created connections based on heightened awareness, love, and compassion. In these micro-miracle moments, it appears that as teachers *became present*, they could *be themselves* in their most self-actualized state— they could embody and exude their *teacher Presence*. It can be read that the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* is actualized and embodied as teachers flow through stress in a way that they burn in to themselves and then *become* capable of embodying something much bigger than themselves in the moment— that being compassion, care, and love.

Conceptually, the process of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* can be made visible by imagining what is happening energetically in the mind, body, and spirit of the teacher through the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model.* Moving courageously and consciously into stress, breathing into the present moment (e.g., engaging the left loop of *Horizontal Infinity Loop*), grounding down in the self through feeling their emotions, connecting to intuition, and reaching up to touch base with their imagination of who they want to *become* (e.g., traversing the *Vertical Infinity Loop*) appears to produce micro-miracle moments where they are in control of shifting their perspective and *being*-ness in a way that they dis-position themselves, allowing compassion, love, and care (e.g., right loop of the *Horizontal Infinity Loop*) to flow through them and into the connections with their students.

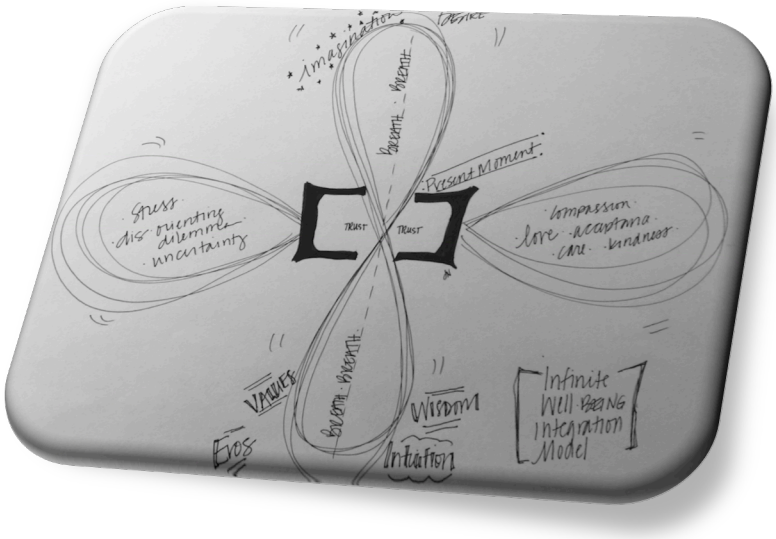

Figure 4.13 "Burning In" and cultivating teacher Presence conceptual model

Integrating all the phenomenological material, provocations, and pathic productions produced and explored in and throughout this post-intentional phenomenological exploration of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*, it is theorized that as teachers mindfully, contingently, and recursively traverse the infinity loops of *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model* and move through stress in a way that they integrate into themselves and *become* more than themselves through acts of compassion, kindness, and love that they, as a by-product effect, produce macro-miracle moments that impact not just themselves and their students, but systems and society. A macro-miracle moment is theorized as a moment when a teacher's (or human service professional) resilience, courage, capacity, self-love, and mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual *being*-ness integrate to create social, institutional, and systematic change.

Williamson (1975) quotes the Course in Miracles when she writes:

> 'our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us'… And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others. (pp. 190-191)

Returning our attention back to Barbara's courage and capacity to ground down in herself and tap into the infinite source of self-love and love for all her students in a moment of emotional, physical, and mental stress, it can be read that she created a *macro-miracle moment* where she transfigured her anger, rage, shame, disappointment, and hurt into a powerful force of radical love for herself and her students. Through aligning with this force, it may be interpreted that she discovered a power within herself that when channeled into action had a positive ripple effect on many systems and the souls within those systems. Below, she describes what transpired after the meeting with her administration and union representative where she looked her principal in the eyes and told the truth about how she felt and deserved to be treated and respected:

> I was informed shortly after this meeting that the mentally ill girl's parents had agreed to get her the help she needed, and she is now in a 6-week in-patient psych program for kids. An ESP was assigned to this class and the autistic girl now enters the room without crying and participates… she likes music! She smiles! She's able to do the written work! This ESP also helps and is wonderful with the other autistic boy and with the boy with

> ADHD… He has blossomed AND I was shocked that even though his English still has a long way to go, he sings like an angel.
>
> I wrote a letter thanking my principal and the administration for (finally) getting me the help I have known I've needed. In the letter I praised the ESP (who was assigned to help this student) and listed the specific things that she does with these difficult students that have already, in just a few short weeks, made a HUGE difference. The ESP was so touched that I spoke so highly of her that she printed out the email and showed her family. Other ESPs in the building have pulled me aside and told me how happy THEY (emphasis original) are that their work— underpaid and often underappreciated— was recognized.

Barbara then expresses so poignantly what I believe the phenomenological material suggests about engaging the process of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model* to cultivate a radiant, healthy, and integrated *teacher Presence*:

> Gratitude begets gratitude. Self-love promotes love of others. The mentally ill student will return in April. My mantra hasn't changed. Much. I will be patient (with myself). I will love (myself). I will breathe. Your work matters so much to my work. And, really, it is all the same, isn't it? Thank you.

As I read this section of Barbara's email during my post-reflexion on the phenomenological material, I wrote in the margins: "Are *we* the ones we are waiting for? Are *we* the ones we are waiting to provide love, validation, and appreciation we deserve? Are *we* the only ones who can really give ourselves *this* kind of love that makes the type of impact we were called to make through our work?" It surely becomes thinkable and believable! Lorde (1984) says:

> When we begin to live from within outward, in touch with the power of the erotic within ourselves, and allowing that power to inform and illuminate our actions upon the world around us, then we begin to be responsible for ourselves in the deepest sense. For as we begin to recognize our deepest feelings, we begin to give up, of necessity, being satisfied with suffering and self-negation. (p. 59)

For Barbara, when she discovered her innate power to be the one to love herself, she appears to discover how this connection to herself, her emotions, and her intuition allow her to engage her emotionality in a way that play a critical role in *socially-just* teaching where tapping into and feeling her emotions not only validates herself but also powerfully demonstrate how emotions can be engaged as critical and transformational

forces in teaching for social justice (Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2008). Interpreting Barbara's experience as a "macro-miracle moment" where she consciously and strategically shifted the emotional energy in herself and of the experience from fear (i.e., anger, rage, confusion, frustration, etc.) to love (i.e., determination, passion, and compassionate action, etc.), it may be inferred that she engaged and embodied Lorde's (1987) assertion that self-care is not self-indulgence, but rather an act of political warfare.

Given this phenomenological material, I assert that when teachers are fully present for themselves in moments of their darkest shame attacks, emotional pain, sense of loneliness, and isolation that self-attention and self-witnessing through mindful awareness can create an inner spaciousness to leverage the emotional reactions to stress as the catalyst for personal transformation and self-actualization. It becomes thinkable and believable that the more a teacher consciously, with mindful awareness, attention, intention, and positive attitude, moves energetically in, around, and through the horizontal and vertical loops of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*, she not only cultivates deeper love, respect, and care for herself (i.e., "burning-in" to herself and her work), she exudes this powerful energetic state through the creation of macro-miracle moments that produce the embodiment of radical of love and compassionate care.

Embodying Radical Love and Compassionate Care

"All awakening to love is a spiritual awakening" (hooks, 2000, p. 83). Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator, philosopher, and advocate for critical pedagogy in education as a practice of liberation and freedom speaks of teaching is an act of the revolutionary power of love. "Teachers who have answered the call to a liberatory practice of education, are in fact, truly motivated by their passion for learning and teaching and their love for others. They seem to sense, even if they cannot readily articulate it, the manner in which the very act of learning and making knowledge stimulates our human capacity to experience ourselves as a subject in our world" (Darder, 2017, p. 81).

In, *Reinventing Paulo Freire: A pedagogy of love*, Darder (2017) illustrates how Freire's brand of radical love was not merely a romanticized, feel-good kind of love, nor was it all about:

> absolute consensus, or unconditional acceptance, or unceasing words of sweetness… Instead, it is a love without constriction, rooted in a committed willingness to struggle persistently with purpose in our life and to intimately connect that purpose with what he called our 'true vocation'— to be human. (p. 40)

Radical love and spiritual self-actualization appear to be entangled together. In her book, *all about love*, hooks (2000) asserts that it would be much easier for us to learn how to love and *be* more loving in our lives if we shared a definition of it. She draws on M. Scott Peck's definition of love as "'the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth'" (p. 4). As I dug deeper in into the theoretical history of the concept of radical love in education and coupled this learning with my own embodied experience of being called to the profession out of a longing to assist other human beings in their spiritual development, I can see how teaching as a professional practice *becomes* the conduit for the manifestation of pure love; both love for one's self and love for another.

Barbara's phenomenological material can be read and interpreted as an example of this embodiment of love without constriction, rooted in a committed willingness to struggle persistently through her true vocation— to re-humanize herself, her students, the ESPs (education support professional), administrators, and the space she shares with students in the midst of stress and struggle. Darder (2017) says that in his world and work, Freire was adamant about loving in the very midst of fear, anxiety, and imperfection; that this kind of love expressed during times of doubt, uncertainty, and oppression constituted the powerful expression of our humanity. Reflecting back on hooks's (2000) definition of love as the will to extend one's self for the spiritual growth of the self and other, and Freire's conceptualization of radical love as a type of love that runs in, with, and throughout suffering and pain, it may be inferred that as educators flow through the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*, cultivating and stoking their *teacher Presence*, they create macro-miracle moments where they embody radical love through their actions to re-humanize the profession in powerful and profound ways that have an impact not only on their heart and souls but on their students' hearts and souls as well. "It was through such love, [Freire] surmised, that teachers could find the strength, faith, and

humility to establish solidarity and struggle together to transform the oppressive ideologies and practices of education" (Darder, 2017, p. 80).

Spiritually speaking, Freire (1990) asserts that radical love is made manifest and embodied when human "*beings* transcend themselves— who move forward and look ahead," and this "requires an intense faith in man, faith in his power to make and remake, to create and re-create, faith in his vocation to be more fully human (which is not the privilege of an elite, but the birthright of all men)" (Freire, 1990, pp. 72, 79). It becomes thinkable that as teachers engage the process of moving in, around, and through the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*, they transform stress, oppression, and struggle in a way that they engage the process of self-transcendence (e.g., traverse the *Vertical Infinity Loop*) through gaining control in the present moment by *being* and *becoming* the teacher they desire to *be* (e.g., embodying compassion, calm, care, and love). As she *becomes* the teacher she desires to *be*, one who is in alignment with her core values, passions, and purpose, she transcends herself through *being* compassionate and loving toward another.

Radical love is action of liberation and freedom. And it appears that when are able to lean into the power of *eros* within the present moment*,* that inner well of infinite creative energy, desire, and passion, it allows us to *be* in a powerful way with our students. Lorde (1984) speaks about the ways that the erotic functions in her relationships with others; "The sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual, forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference" (p. 89). If we aspire to cultivate classrooms that embody radical love, creating dialogic space, community building, freedom to express and explore our individual and collective passions and emotions, and cultivate critical consciousness, we need to first risk living life from the inside outward and "in touch with the power of the erotic within ourselves, and allowing that power to inform and illuminate our actions upon the world around us" (Lorde, 1984, p. 58). In this way, embodying radical love can be interpreted as a by-product of the creation of the macro-miracle moment.

The Final (for now) production of the exploration of the cultivation of *teacher Presence*

As all the different phenomenological material in this study intra-acts (Barad, 2007)— teacher lived experiences, theory, images, and researcher post-reflexion— there appears to be an integration of the phenomenon that produces something beyond the what the individual elements could ever produce on their own. This production being the visible depiction and conceptualization of the invisible process of the cultivation of teacher well-*being*-ness: the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*.

Embodying radical love and compassionate care for one's students (or patients) may not only feel good and produce important psycho-spiritual rewards for the human service professional, it may also be good for their overall health! "Caring for others and going that extra mile for family, friends, coworkers, or strangers could have a connection to our physical health. Exercising empathy and compassion and performing good deeds makes our bodies and spirits thrive" (Myss, 2004, p. 7). In her book, *Invisible Acts of Power*, Myss (2004) cites studies that confirm how being in a positive helping emotional and mental state "cause greater activity in the brain and increase the antibodies that fight disease. In other words, helping others promotes our own wellness" (p. 7).

I suggest that when human service professionals connect intimately with their values and desires through the breath in moments of stress (i.e., traversing the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*), they enter into what Brennan (1993) says to be "one of the most powerful paths to self-healing…enter[ing] into a positive emotional relationship with yourself" (p. 131). In engaging this self-healing through entering into a positive emotional relationship with the self, teachers appear to enable themselves to transcend themselves and embody compassion and love for another. Given this insight, it becomes thinkable that as a teacher moves in, through, and around the *Horizontal and Vertical Loops* of *the Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*, they generate positive, love filled energy resonates both inwardly (toward the self) and outwardly (toward the other) simultaneously. Much like the breath appears to extend out on an inhale and down into the self on the exhale, perhaps the same principle holds true for the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*— as one exhales love and compassion through micro and macro-miracle moments, they also inhale love and compassion into the self. It may be interpreted that this process is a powerful and profound antidote to burnout.

Being present. Three forces appear to be interacting, swirling, and integrating in and through each other in the cultivation the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* through the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*. First, "*being present*" is a necessary state of the mind, body, and spirit. *Being present* is mindfulness in action in the moment; it is "attention to the experience *as it is happening*— that is, *in the present moment*" (Smalley & Winston, 2010, p. 9). *Being present* is a perpetual practice only ever cultivated in the present moment, and cultivating present moment awareness is what mindfulness invites us to do. "To be present is far from trivial. It may be the hardest work in the world. And forget about the 'may be.' It *is* the hardest work in the world—at least to sustain presence" (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 82).

The nexus where the *Horizontal* and *Vertical Infinity Loops* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model* intersect visually represents the invisible act of *being* and *becoming* present (simultaneously) in the present moment through the breath. The breath is what breathes spaciousness into the mind, body, and spirit allowing the individual to *be* in the moment they find themselves in, stressful or not, in a way that is non-reactive. *Being present* through the breath in moments of stress may create a profound opportunities for the individual to *become* present in a way that they connect to themselves (i.e., spirit).

(lower case p) *presence.* Kabat-Zinn (2005) describes *presence* as state of *being*-ness that is palpable:

> If you happen to stumble upon somebody who is meditating, you know instantly that you have come into the orbit of something unusual and remarkable. Because I lead meditation classes and retreats, I have that experience quite often. I look out sometimes at hundreds of people sitting in silence, on purpose, with nothing happening whatsoever except what is happening in the various interior landscapes of life unfolding in the moment for each and every person there….to gaze upon such a gathering…sharing in the energy field of the silence….[i]t is intrinsically attractive and harmonizing…I feel the presence and beauty of those around me far more than if we were in conversation. (pp. 81-82)

"Human presence is never neutral. It always has an effect" (O'Donohue, 1999, pp. 58, 59). Entering into present moment awareness appears to influence one's *presence* or state of palpable state of *being*-ness. As teachers in this study often described during moments when they felt they were *being* present, they felt as if their calm *presence* was

contagious. It appears that our inner states-of-*being*-ness invisibly and energetically transmits outwardly to those around us. Myss (1997) says that "our physical bodies are surrounded by an energy field that extends as far out as your outstretched arms and the full length of your body," and that we are "constantly 'in communication' with everything around us through this system" (p. 33). In terms of *presence (lower case p)*, it appears that no matter what, we are always communicating outwardly our inward state of *being*-ness. As human service professionals, this is critically important to acknowledge since we are in constant intuitive, emotional, and physical communication with those we teach, heal, and help. O'Donohue (1999) says that "[p]resence is something you sense and know, but cannot grasp. It engages us, but we can never capture its core…When you are happy and at peace, your presence is gentle and approachable. When you are worried or anxious, there is a tension in your presence, and it closes and tightens. If we were able to read presence, we could sense what is happening inside a person's mind" (p. 54).

Like Kabat-Zinn (2005) describes the invisible felt-ness of individuals connecting deeply with themselves and meeting their interiority (i.e., thoughts, emotions, physical sensations) with a calm, objective, nonjudgmental witnessing, their *presence* can be felt. The term "presencing" is used by Senge et al. (2004) to describe a strategy for professionals based on successful processes of organizational systems. "This word is a combination of presence and sensing, and expresses a deep and complete perception of the here-and-now, beyond ordinary interpretations of the reality" (Evelein & Korthagen, 2015). Through the process of presencing, one combines the internal (inner experiences) with the external (observations of the environment) in a way that they become connected and inform each other.

Korthagen et al. (2013; 2015) leverage the work of Senge et al. (2004) through the creation of the Core Reflection Approach. Core Reflection is a reflective process that invites teachers to engage who they are in the process of reflecting on professional practices so to encourage authenticity, identity, and integrity in their teaching. The Core Reflection Approach is based on mindfulness practices and principles that invite teachers to reflect on their experiences in the classroom through the "here and now" and their personal values and core ideals thus positively impacting their *presence.* "On the basis of the state of presence, and through the connection with one's core potentials in the here-

and-now, a creative process can surface bringing the person into a state of flow in which new possibilities are enacted" (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2009).

The Core Reflection Approach is used in *Present Teacher* Training sessions because it is a strategic and effective way for teachers to engage the intersections of the *Vertical Loop* and *Horizontal Loops* of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*. The Core Reflection approach invites teachers to process external experiences in the classroom through the lens of their core values and desires and allows them to experience *how to be in relationship* to the experience or "problems" in their practice through their core selves. The by-product effect is greater *presence* in their professional practice. **(Capital P) *Presence*.** What is the difference between *"presence*," much like Korthagen et al. (2013; 2015) advocate and cultivate through the Core Reflection Model and the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence*? This was a guiding line of inquiry through this study. The phenomenon of *teacher Presence* cannot be distilled down into an essence. It appears that *teacher Presence* is akin to how O'Donohue (1999) speaks about one's personal Presence: "Presence is mainly the atmosphere of spirit that is behind them all and comes through them" (p. 53). Importantly, the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* has no definable essential core. Conversely, it may be the *integration of the instability of the difference and diversity within and outside of the selfhood of the teacher* that perpetually produces and re-produces the cultivation of a *teacher's Presence— an ineffable yet palpable and energetically recognizable soul/ spiritual signature of the individual teacher that is always making, undoing, and remaking itself through her relationship to the world, another human being, and herself.*

It appears that when chaos, instability, and uncertainty in external experiences (e.g., left loop of *Horizontal Infinity Loop*) is met with an individual's innate capacity for conscious attention, awareness, and intention, she empowers herself to *transform* her experiences in ways that become beneficial to her spiritual growth and self-actualization. In engaging mindfulness and accessing this innate capacity to *be present* in any moment, a teacher may engage the process of transformation of the situation (e.g., *Horizontal Infinity Loop*) so to engage self-transcendence (e.g., *Vertical Infinity Loop*). As a teacher engages this perpetual and reciprocal process of trans-formation of the experience and transcendence of the self, she cultivates *teacher Presence*.

The Vertical Infinity Loop INTEGRATING with the Horizontal Loop of the Infinite Well-Being Integration Model. Considering all the phenomenological material and interpretations of the phenomenon at this point in the study, it is at this moment that I believe the phenomenon bursts forth and becomes something once previously un-thinkable. It may be read that as teachers engage the *Vertical Loop* of the I*nfinite Well-Being Integration Model*, they engage in a process of self-transcendence where they "burn-in" to themselves *through* the stress of the profession.

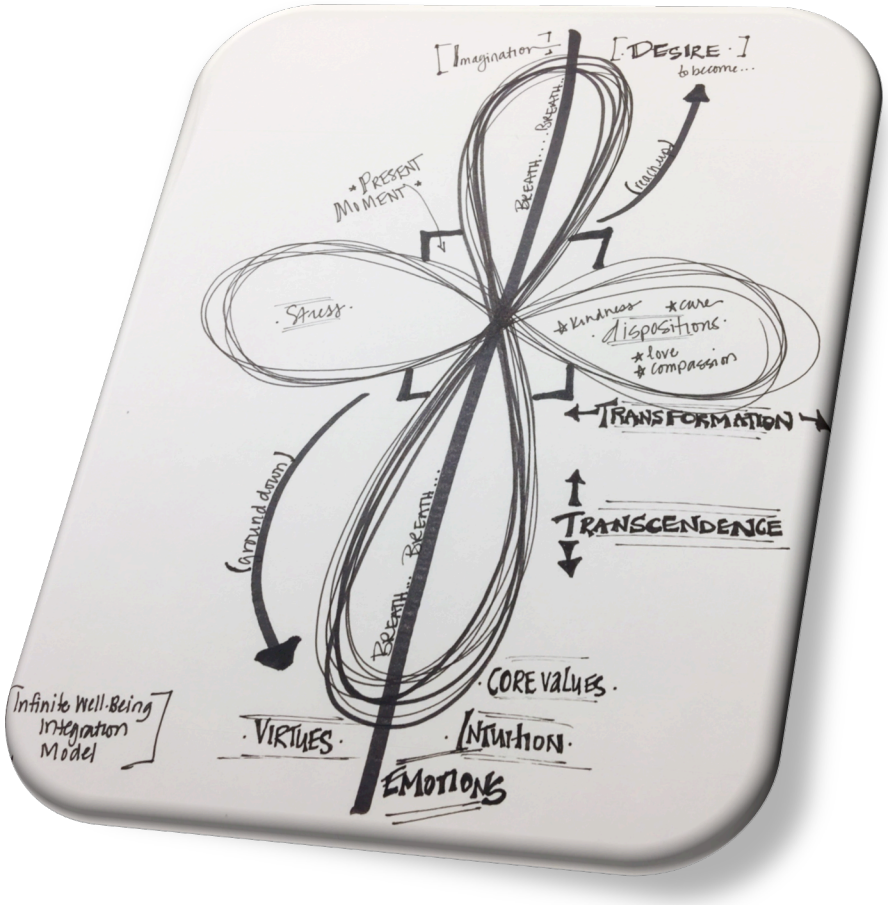

Figure 4.14 Vertical Loop: Transcendence

It can be read that as teachers engaged the present moment through their breath, they connected with themselves in a profound way where they gained access to a connection with their values and virtues (lower loop) as well as their desires and imagination for who they aspire to *become* and their purpose for *being* (upper loop). "Transcendence," as it is

used here, aligns with Brennan's (1993) explanation of personal transcendence where one "reaches up" to higher values of *becoming* and brings them down into the self in the moment.

The final production of this post-intentional phenomenological exploration of the cultivation of *teacher Presence* is the insight that when teachers engage a positive cycle of self-integration, they become more *of* and more *than* themselves through the stress inherent in their profession, and thus, simultaneously cultivate and radiate *teacher Presence*— an ever changing state of vibrant, healing, healthy, and authentic *being-ness in and through* the moments it is most in need.

Image 4.15 Sky at Twilight

To provide a textual representation (e.g., poem) of the cultivation of the phenomenon of *teacher Presence* as it is being produced in this body of work, I draw on *Image 4.15* as inspiration. This picture captures the birth of twilight taken mid-flight from the United States to Europe, and it was this image that produced the poem that captures the phenomenon in another point of its unfolding expression. This image can be read as a meeting between the contradiction of the visible (lower half of the image with the clouds and grounding of the Earth below) and invisible worlds (the upper half of the image that represents the infinite sky). The point of contradiction is where the two different sides of the invisible and visible worlds meet (i.e., the burst of light at the horizon) and is interpreted as a moment of self-integration. O'Donohue (1997) says that we should seek points of contradiction in ourselves and not be afraid of them. "Contradiction is what makes a person interesting. Contradiction is the presence which makes the presence of the complexity of the person visible in some way" (1997, audiobook).

Soul Being Seen

with or without awareness
deep down
in the invisible
dark
inside haunting hurt
your soul extracting
vital nutrients
feeding on the decaying
de-composing
experiences, breathed, felt
pain
of having been
clouded
overcast
a force reveals itself
swelling, swirling, pulsing
desire
eros
the hot breath of soul
unstoppable
re-storifying itself
in the deterritorialization
of the storied self
at the sacred threshold
the charnel ground
of soul restoration
where the two sides touch
intimacy birthed between
the clouded space of having been
with the infinite space of *becoming*
producing and providing
a passageway for
Presence
soul glowing ablaze
combusting at the threshold of contradiction
breaking free, getting unstuck
in the middle
illuminating truth
in the moment
that rests in the space
between
deviantly escaping
limitation
unashamed
unapologetic
being the very thing
it is *becoming*

PAPER FIVE

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The way out is in. (Hanh, 2013)

Introduction

Mounting evidence suggests the pervasiveness of stress and insidiousness of burnout in the teaching profession. "Because every day is unpredictable and full of new demands and challenges, many teachers experience ongoing stress, and with that stress comes a range of negative health outcomes affecting teacher motivation, performance, and zeal for teaching" (Larrivee, 2012, p. vii). We know from the research on teacher stress and burnout that what starts as an occupational identity crisis quickly generalizes into the entire self-concept of the teacher (Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999). Burnout is the root cause for why many new teachers flee the profession, never fully discovering their talent and effectiveness as educators or fulfilling their passionate professional pursuits.

The current teacher turnover rate hovers at about 50% with new teachers leaving the profession within the first five years (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003). The research on teacher stress and burnout also suggests that teachers are not only leaving the profession at alarming rates, given the characteristics of burnout, they may be leaving the profession feeling like failures in fulfilling their heart's calling.

Much like teachers who feel called or summoned to serve their students through their vocation, I feel summoned to study and explore how to strategically support the mental, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being of those teachers who were (and are) courageously answer the call to teach. As a veteran professional elementary educator and teacher educator for over two decades and as a mindfulness, meditation, and yoga teacher, my passion for teaching, my love for all teachers called to this vocation, my reverence for the children they teach, and my dedication to the professionalism of the teaching practice have all entangled to produce this body of work and research. It is my contribution to add to the collective consciousness about how to support, mentor, and strategically cultivate teacher emotional, mental, physical, *and* spiritual well-*being*-ness.

"The call to help teachers take a more proactive stance to insulate themselves from the onset of burnout is just beginning to be heard" (Larrivee, 2012, p. vii). This dissertation is dedicated to answering that call. Palmer (1997) reminds us that teaching, like any human activity, "emerges from one's inwardness, for better or for worse" (p. 15). Researchers, and this research included, are turning their attention to exploring *how* to systematically and strategically support and cultivate teacher emotional, cognitive, and spiritual health.

Mindfulness training within teacher professional development is becoming a rich and exciting area of research that shows promising results in reducing psychological symptoms of stress and burnout and improving teacher health, happiness, and effectiveness (Flook et al., 2013; Gold et al., 2009). There is increasing literature to suggest that mindfulness is a useful intervention to address the unique stressors teachers face and is a productive intervention for cultivating emotional and mental resilience (Beshai et al., 2015; Flook et al., 2013; Gold et. al., 2009, 2010; Napoli, 2004). This dissertation is intended to add to the qualitative research on the ways in which mindfulness training positively impacts and influences the *embodiment* and *being*-ness of the teacher in her professional calling.

Using a qualitative phenomenological methodology for exploring the entangled, ephemeral, and often invisible process of *being* and *becoming* an emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually healthy teacher allowed for an exploration of the ways that mindfulness *is*, can *be,* and can *become* a conduit, practice, and way of *being* that contributes to the cultivation of *teacher Presence.* Through a post-intentional phenomenological exploration on the cultivation of *teacher Presence*, the following provocations and pathic productions of the phenomenon were produced and explored in detail throughout this dissertation:

(1) ***The Micro-Miracle Moment***

Pathic Production: *Creating the "slow in the fast" of teaching—Teachers (slowly) becoming themselves through being present in the present moment.*

- ∞ *Provocation #1: …Being present in fast-paced moments in teaching can allow for a teacher to slow down the speed of time to….*
- ∞ *Provocation #2: …Integrate intentions, awareness, and attitudes to teach from a calm, open, and nonjudgmental mind that may provoke the possibility to…*
- ∞ *Provocation #3: …Create the Micro-Miracle moment.*

(2) ***Integration of the Self through Dis-positioning the Self***

Pathic Production: *Integrating the Selfhood of Teacher In-Between the Kairos Moment*

- ∞ *Provocation #1: …Transfiguring institutional distrust and control may provoke threshold crossing into...*
- ∞ *Provocation #2: ...the Kairos moments where a teacher may cultivate trust in her intuition which may provoke…*
- ∞ *Provocation #3:...Becoming the teacher she desires to be through the act of dis-positioning herself.*

(3) ***The Macro-Miracle Moment***

Pathic Production: "*Burning In" to Human Service Oriented Work Through the Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*

Three Provocations:

- ∞ *Provocation #1: …Leveraging "disorienting dilemmas" as sacred stress opportunities may provoke…*
- ∞ *Provocation #2: ... the Cultivation of self-integration and intuitive resistance that may provoke…*
- ∞ *Provocation #3: ...the Creation of the Macro-Miracle Moment.*

Implication for Professional Practice

Based on the findings through this post-intentional phenomenological research, the following three implications and suggestions for professional practice are:

(1) *To contribute to the collective body of growing educational research of teacher stress, burnout, and well-being by proposing an integrative well-being model of teacher growth and development as an antidote to burnout: The Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*

(2) *Connect "soul with role" in teacher preparation programs at the pre-service and in-service levels through an integrated teacher training approach*

(3) *Re-imagine a contingent and recursive framework for teacher dispositional actualization and transformation*

The *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*

"A tree grows up and grows down at once and produces enough branches in its wild divinity. It doesn't limit itself— it reaches for the sky and it reaches for the source, all in one seamless kind of movement" (O'Donohue, 2015, p. 39).

Image 5.1 Tree on the grounds of Ballynahinch Castle, Connemara, Ireland

Like the tree, the phenomenological material in this study suggests that in terms of cultivating *teacher Presence*, a teacher's personal and professional self grow up and grow down synchronously through the act of *being* a teacher. As their "professional "growth grows up (i.e., self-actualization/ *becoming* the teacher they desire to be) and "personal" grows down (i.e., *becoming* connected to one's core values, virtues, and purposes as a human *being*), the branches that get produced *become* the infinite connections to students through mirco and macro-miracle moments of embodied compassion, care, and kindness. In this way, teacher well-*being* is imagined as an integrative, interactive, and intermingled process of *being* present*, becoming* the teacher one desires to be, *actualizing* the self through the work/stress of teaching, and going beyond the self to connect with another through *embodying* connective dispositions. It appears throughout the study that like Hanh (2013) suggests, "the way out is in," the way out of stress is to go inward into the self to extract personal meaning from the external experience.

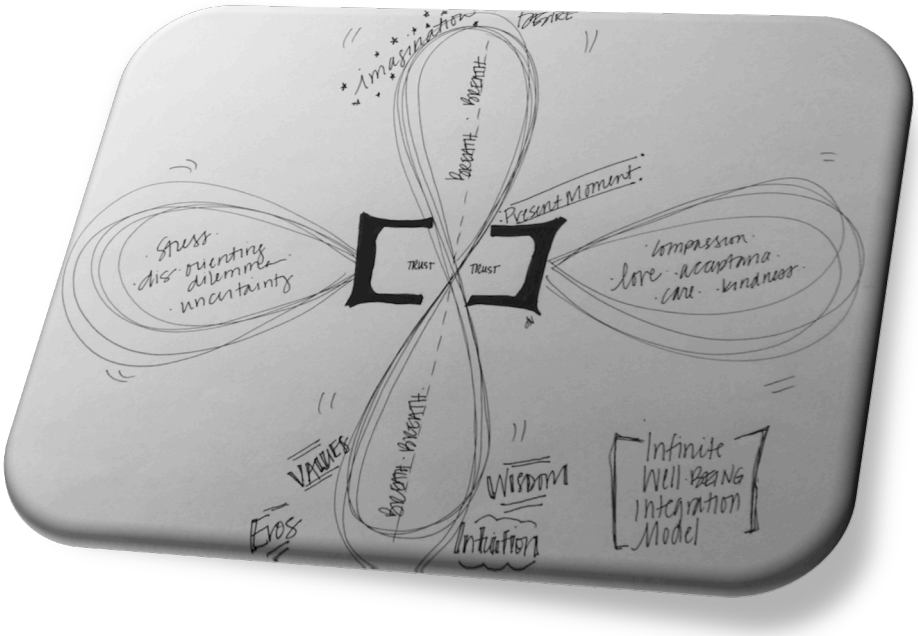

Image 5.2 Infinite Well-Being Integration Model

The Burnout Antidote

Unchecked and unresolved stress that extends over a long period of time tends to manifest as burnout. A teacher can and may burnout along the following four domains of *being*-ness: mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual. When a teacher burns out along these domains, since they are all interconnected, she tends to display the following three most common manifestations of self-abnegation: increased emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished sense of self-efficacy.

The *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model* suggests an antidote, or rather a reverse process, to the well documented process of burnout— an infinitely recursive (i.e., always happening) and contingent, (i.e., in the present moment) process of burning *into* the self *through* inherent stress provoking experiences in the vocation of teaching. As result of phenomenological material in this study, it is theorized that when teachers engage the process conceptualized in the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*, they manifest three important signs of "burning-in": intuitive integration (e.g., increased emotional self-awareness, intelligence, and agility), increased personalization and connection with students (i.e., compassion, empathy, and care), and increased self-efficacy, self-respect, and self-love (i.e., increased self-esteem).

Burning Out	*Burning In*
* Emotional exhaustion	* Increased emotional intelligence & agility
*Depersonalization	*Increased personalization & soul connection
*Decreased self-efficacy	*Increased self-love, self-esteem, self-trust

Figure 5.3 Burn Out vs. Burn In Table

Theorizing "Integrative" Teacher Preparation and In-Service Support

> There is a general agreement among practitioners of integrative medicine that mindfulness itself forms the 'container' for this discipline. Without mindfulness and the nonjudgmental 'presencing' it encourages and nurtures in health-care practitioners, the sacred dimension of the practitioner-patient relationship is all to easily eroded or lost, and the profound potential of each human being for learning, growing, healing, and personal transformation across the life span is either ignored or unwittingly actively thwarted. (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p. XXXI)

As human service professionals, teachers share with health care practitioners the sacred dimensions of human service oriented work: the relationship with the ones they are called to serve. A teacher's relationship with her students is a sacred dimension of her professional practice AND is often cited as the primary psychic reward of her work. Paradoxically, contentious teacher-student relationships are cited as being profoundly stressful for teachers. When relationships with students are connective, authentic, and flourishing, teachers appear to thrive spiritually in their calling and treat students with greater reverence, care, and compassion. Teachers in this particular study cite these kinds of connections with students as allowing them to "feel like a good teacher." As Kabat-Zinn (1990) cites above and this phenomenological study discovered, the capacity of a teacher to *be present* appeared to open up the space to engage micro-miracle moments of connection with a student where a teacher's nonjudgmental and open "*presencing*" could

animate their connection in ways that not only appear to positively impact student attitude and learning, it appears to enhance the psychic[18] health and well-*being* of the teacher.

The findings in this study suggest that an intentional and strategic integrative educational approach to create programs of study (e.g., undergraduate/ graduate training programs) and in-service support (e.g., professional development for practicing teachers) where the mind, soul/spirit, and emotional body of the teacher is validated and cultivated is in need. It is suggested that a deliberate move be made to connect the "soul with the role" (Palmer, 2003) in pre-service and in-service curriculum for teachers; curriculum that serves as "a pedagogy that honors the integrity of every soul" (Palmer, 2003, p. 382) and allows for an exploration of the intricacies and invisible forces that influence human relationships within the profession of teaching— most especially the relationship a teacher has with herself.

As the phenomenological material in this study suggests, a teacher's relationship with herself influences her mental, emotional, and spiritual health and well-*being*-ness. Intentionally creating integrative (mind, body, soul/spirit) pre-service and in-service pedagogy and training for teachers creates the space and opportunity for a teacher to become more self-aware and critically conscious of the way she stands in relationship to herself, her experiences, her students, her practice, and her world-view.

A core element of the cultivation of *teacher Presence* is self-awareness, because the depth in which we "know they self" directly influences the way we come to "know" or *perceive* thy other. Integrative programs that focus on the whole person as "*mindbodyspirit*" must cultivate self-awareness and self-reflection (Kreitzer & Koithan, 2014, p. 20). Teachers, like nurses, must have opportunities within their training programs to engage in practices that cultivate these two fundamental principles that underscore their capacity *be* present (for themselves, the moment, and their students) and extend and embody compassion, care, and love through their *being*-ness with others. Integrative programming for teachers, like nurses, "requires ongoing inquiry into and cultivation of the true self, along with a careful tending of that self, which is the instrument for healing" (Kreitzer & Koithan, 2014, p. 20).

[18] emotional, spiritual, and mental

Joining a pedagogy of heartfulness and soul with *and* alongside the pedagogies of intellect and practice may allow our teachers to engage in relationships with students from a place of deeper compassion, empathy and acceptance, because they have been provided with guidance and opportunities within their educational practice to engage and explore these same humanizing dispositional states of *being*-ness toward themselves. For "it is not enough to train would-be-teachers in the facts, theories, and methods that lead to credentials and jobs, if we fail to help them examine the dynamics of their own inner lives that will inevitably form— or deform— the work they do in the world" (Palmer, 2003, p. 384).

One's introspective, reflective exploration is the bedrock element of one's *being-ness* in the classroom that appears to not only cultivate *teacher Presence,* it may allow and invite one to *be* present in one's teaching so to engage important socially-just teaching practices. Before we as teachers can attempt to facilitate student reflection of the social realities that impact opportunity and privilege and guide them in exploring the ways in which they are positioned in the world and how their worldviews are shaped by forces beyond their control, we must be able to walk alongside of them with an aura of confidence, courage, and resilience that comes from having done this exact same work for ourselves. A teacher stokes this powerful *teacher Presence* that engenders trust, confidence, acceptance, and reverence by engaging in her own inner exploration of these external *and* internal forces of oppression (i.e., the inner judge) as well as the truth of her own source of unlimited power to strategically leverage these prejudices, rejection, and experiences of limiting "isms" (sexism, racism, classism, etc.) "to bring awareness to [her] own inner landscape and to love [herself] even more fiercely" (Amara, 2016, p. 163).

An integrated approach to teacher preparation and in-service support where opportunities, training, and coursework that supports the intellect (i.e., mental agility), body (i.e., emotional agility), and spirit (i.e., awareness of self) of the teacher may create space for a teacher to gain insight into her own humanity so she may better equipped explore the ways her lens with which she views herself and another has been shaped and formed from her embodied experiences in the world. If a teacher is consumed by the stress of the profession and has not received any education or preparation on how to cope

with stress through effective mental, emotional, and physical processing strategies, her relationship with herself becomes dis-integrated and her capacity to *be* present for herself and her students becomes atrophied and distorted. A "teacher's academic education does not include any sort of psychological preparation or self-awareness tools, so teachers tend to lack the resources and abilities needed to meet the rigors and demands that their work as educators requires of them day to day" (Anadon, 2005; Bisquerra, 2005; as cited in Franco et al., 2010, p. 656). Our teachers need support and opportunities to learn and engage the reflective practices and mental and emotional strategies and tools that are known to change the brain and cultivate the attitude (i.e., openness, curiosity), habits of mind (i.e., resilience, adaptable, growth-mindset), and dispositions (i.e., compassion, reverence, acceptance, and critical consciousness) necessary to cope with stress, thrive in uncertainty and failure, and open up to exploring their own innate inner diversity so they may *be* and *become* curious and reverential toward the diversity in their students.

Pathic Pedagogies Methods Course. To align with an integrative "*mindbodyspirit*" (Kreitzer & Koithan, 2014) educational approach to teacher preparation, this body of work proposes the creation of a "Pathic Pedagogies Methods Course" that could make foundational experiences, practices, and opportunities to explore and engage one's exploration of their own humanness and how one's relationship with one's self influences and impacts what it means to *be* and *become* a teacher. A foundational methods course that is "pathic" in nature could provide the opportunity and space to validate and explore the felt, sensed, relational, and situational knowing-ness that is so critical to the calling of teaching. A Pathic Pedagogies Method Course could situate learning about *being* and *becoming* a teacher through an inner exploration of the identity of the teacher.

In effect, a Pathic Pedagogies Methods Course could assist the profession in connecting the "soul with the role" (Palmer, 2003). "The relation of the teacher and student must be deeply human for real learning to occur" (Palmer, 2003, p. 380), thus a Pathic Pedagogies Methods Course could focus primarily on the relational component of teaching by cultivating and deepening the relationship a teacher has with herself. A Pathic Pedagogies Methods course could become a powerful space for future teachers to engage important questions central to their developing identity as a teacher; questions like: *What am I? Why am I? How should I act? Why should I be moral? What is my*

experience? What is my effect? What are the interrelationships between myself and others? (Glazer, 1999; Nash, 2002).

Self-exploration and awareness of who we are, who we know ourselves to *be*, and who we desire to *become* is a critical line of inquiry for human service professionals, because how we relate to ourselves influences all our relationships. Teaching is inherently a relational profession and "much of a teacher's knowing resides in their embodied practices, relations, and actions" (Vagle, 2010, p. 143) and are thus pathic and relational by nature. Since pathic pedagogies assume that teaching is dependent on relational perceptiveness and intuitive awareness (van Manen, 2105), a Pathic Pedagogies Methods Course could invite aspiring teachers to intentionally cultivate both these core competencies.

A Pathic Pedagogies Methods Course could also engage future teachers with the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model* where they strategically reflect on their relationship to everyday stressors in a way that invites them to engage in exploring their core values, expectations, ideals, and beliefs about who they are and who they desire to *become* as a teacher. In the current undergraduate education course I teach, I remind my students that as future teachers, they are learning to become "relationship researchers" before they step into the classroom setting. Since teaching is a relationally-based profession, it is never too early to learn how to practice the art of cultivating trust, compassion, kindness, reverence, deep listening, nonjudgmental awareness, and respect.

Mindfulness Mentoring for Teacher Mentors. Another implication for professional practice influenced by the findings from this phenomenological study would be to provide mindfulness-based professional development for both university supervisors and district level new teacher mentors. Individuals in the role of coaching and mentoring new teachers in *being* and *becoming* pedagogically and instructionally proficient are also coaching and mentoring new teachers in *being* and *becoming* relationally proficient—both toward themselves and their students. Given that a teacher's well-being is entangled with her capacity to be effective, both instructionally and relationally, providing university supervisors and new teacher mentors with information on the signs, symptoms, and manifestations of teacher stress and burnout as well as how to coach and mentor for the emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being of new teachers is essential. As a

university supervisor, the biggest factor that contributes to my capacity to mentor, coach, and support a new teacher is that teacher's mindset and attitude. I have discovered that when new teachers are overwhelmed by stress, exhaustion, and anxiety, they tend to resist opening to feedback to shift their practice in purposeful ways. My capacity to notice the signs and symptoms of burnout, be compassionate and a good listener, and strategically support them with practices that teach them how to manage stress and self-regulate their emotional reactions are necessary precursors to my capacity to coach them on their instructional and pedagogical practices.

New teachers in this study indicated how they sometimes felt judged by individuals coming into their space to give them feedback on their teaching. When a teacher feels judged, she may inadvertently shut down her receptiveness to exploring alternate ways to engage her professional practice. University supervisors and new teacher mentors who have an embodied and working knowledge of the nature and signs of stress and burnout, heightened awareness of and sensitivity towards the attitudinal phases of the first years of teaching (Moir, 1990), training in how to use "dis-orienting dilemmas" as a powerful points of personal and professional growth and change, and increased levels of compassion and nonjudgment may be in a prime position to mentor new teachers to burn IN to themselves through their professional practice.

In her piece, *Modeling Compassion in Critical Justice-Oriented Teacher Education*, Conklin (2006) speaks to the necessity of shifting teacher educators' attention to the self and their own *being*-ness to remind them that the type of teaching they want to instill in their teacher candidates must be *modeled in* and *start with* their own compassionate teaching practices. During a moment of self-awareness of her own judgmental reaction and lack of compassionate response to a student teacher not enacting socially just teaching practices, Conklin (2008) states, "At the time, I felt an urgency to address what I perceived to be inequitable teaching unfolding before my eyes—teaching practices which would disadvantage students. However, I now question how I expected to cultivate the compassionate, equitable teaching practices I hoped to see by making this teacher feel inadequate and incompetent" (p. 653). Conklin (2008) draws our attention to the fact current research cites the importance of care, empathy, and forming trusting relationships with students in K-12 education, yet we can easily neglect to nurture these

same types of empathic, caring relationships with the teachers under our close care as university supervisors and new teacher mentors. Providing strategic and systematic mindfulness-based support, information, and experiences for university supervisors and new teacher mentors to understand how to mentor for "burning-in" to the profession may cultivate a fleet of teacher supervisors and mentors who are not just "technicians" but rather "teacher pedagogues" who *be* and *become* present with new teachers through a caring and compassionate disposition that leads to "thoughtful and tactful supervisory action" (Cuenca, 2010, p. 265).

In-Service Teacher Professional Development: MBIs (Mindfulness-Based Interventions). Providing strategic in-service support for teacher well-being, stress management, and identity development is another way we can work to continually humanize the teaching profession and connect the "soul with the role." *Present Teacher™* Training is one example of a systematic program that is designed to be integrative in that it incorporates experiential learning, transformation theory, educational theory and research, neuroscience, and mindfulness-based practices as invitations for teachers to explore their humanity and innate resilience and potential to transform themselves in and through their profession. Strategic curriculum like *Present Teacher™* Training infused with mindfulness-based practices are designed to help teachers discover how to diffuse the stress reaction, manage strong emotional reactions, cope with challenging experiences, expand self-awareness, cultivate positive emotions, improve attention and concentration, cultivate objective, non-judgmental noticing, and enhance relationships with the self and others.

Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) have been demonstrated to help individuals cope with high levels of stress, become less reactive to negative experiences and emotions, and increase the likelihood to notice positive experiences that result in an increase in varied psychological and physiological benefits (Flook et al., 2013; Khoury et al., 2013). "MBIs are effective in mitigating stress…and show promise in providing teachers with the necessary tools to buffer stress and increase wellbeing" (Beshani et al., p. 2, 2015). Franco et. al (2010) determined from their quasi-experimental design study that examined the efficacy of a mindfulness training program for teachers to reduce psychological distress that teachers who participated in the mindfulness-based

intervention reported significantly lower levels of stress and were less inclined to take sick days than the control group. It appears that mindfulness and mindfulness-based interventions may be a very powerful antidote the burnout crisis infecting so many of our nation's teachers (Beshi, McApline, Weare, & Kuyken, 2015).

Re-Imagining a Contingent Recursive Framework of Teacher Dispositional Growth and Self-Actualization

The phenomenological material in this study suggests the embodiment of *being* a teacher, dispositionally (i.e., *being* compassionate, *being* present, *being* caring, etc.) is intrinsically interconnected and continually influencing who a teacher *becomes*. O'Donohue's (2008) perspective that the visible world is often the first shoreline of the invisible world provides an invitation to teacher educators to entertain and envision the existence of a vast inner invisible world of teacher dispositional actualization (e.g., *becoming one's self through teaching*) alongside the visible enactment or embodiment of teacher dispositions (e.g, *being-ness* with students). As teacher educators continually expand their perceptions and visions of the ways colleges of education grow and cultivate compassionate, caring, ethical, and responsive teachers, I believe it is imperative that we give as much attention to the invisible, inner self-awareness processing that occurs in teacher dispositional work as we do to discussing the visible, observable, and assessable embodiment of dispositions (i.e., dispositional evaluations of teacher performance).

If we as teacher educators agree with Murrell Jr. et al. (2010) that "[f]ostering moral dispositions is at the heart of our work as teacher educators," (p. 96), it is imperative that we widen our perspective of possibility so to glean a more encompassing picture of what teacher dispositional work looks, feels, and behaves like for the teacher engaging in it. In doing so, it is essential that we give proper attention to the invisible, inner work of *becoming* a teacher as well as recognize the way inner dispositional actualization work is inter-related and intimately bound-up in the external embodiment of one's dispositional well-*being*-ness as a teacher.

Current literature and research around teacher dispositional development and evaluation often conceptualizes growth along a series of stages, implying a linear and cumulative progression of development. For example, in *Teaching as a Moral Practice*, Murrell et al. (2010) present seven cases that "offer a picture of work with teacher

dispositions across stages of development— both individual and institutional" (p. 5). The insights gleaned from the phenomenological material in this study is not intended to be a criticism of stage developmentalism as much as it is an offering of a different perspective that seeks to re-imagine teacher dispositional development as a contingent (e.g., in the "now" moments of teaching), recursive (e.g., always occuring), and eliptical (e.g., traversing the vertical and horizontal infinity loops of the *Infinite Well-Being Integration Model*) inner reflective process that results in dispositional *actualization*.

How we as teacher educators conceptualize and talk about cultivating teacher dispositions often mirrors our inner conceptions about the nature of dispositions and how they come to be; this may speak to the recurring discussion around whether "good teachers" are born or made. The phenomenological material in this study suggests both—good teachers are born, in that they have a passion and personal purpose that calls them to the profession, AND they are made and re-made (over and over again) as they engage the present moments of their practice with self-awareness. As teacher educators and researchers, university supervisors, and new teacher mentors, our invisible conceptions and beliefs about the nature of human dispositional origins and their cultivation shapes how we engage (or perhaps, disengage) our future teachers in their own dispositional actualization and cultivation of who they believe they are *becoming* through *being* a teacher.

No matter how many years of professional experience we have under our belts as teachers and teacher educators, we will perpetually bump up against our current limitations in perspective and awareness. Our newest teachers are coming face-to-face with their current edges of experience every single day, thus going through the greatest transition in dispositional actualization. We never reach a pinnacle of awareness where we embody a perfect way of *being* in the world, and in this case, in our teaching. Many disorienting dilemmas (Mezirow, 1997) will arise as invitations for teachers to go inward and explore their personal edges of awareness or limitations in perception so to expand their dispositional habits of mind and ways of *being* as a teacher.

Common language on teacher dispositional assessments often allude to lack of awareness with terms like "unacceptable" or "below expectations." Even language like "no basis for judgment" appears on dispositions assessments if the disposition was not

observable at the time of the brief assessment. Categories like "unacceptable" or "below expectations" use shaming, judgment-based language that does not accurately validate a valuable and normal part of teacher identity and dispositional growth and actualization. It is important to acknowledge the reality that one is never perfectly aware all of the time, and lack of awareness is actually functional in terms of dispositional growth. Insight and expansion of awareness come from reflecting on the places one was previously unaware. The theorizing of lack of awareness and awareness as thresholds helps us to conceptualize that "[i]t's always on the threshold where the two sides of the contradiction meet that the greatest growth actually happens…" (O'Donohue, 1997). This language gives some indication of how we are currently conceptualizing the ways teachers evolve, dispositionally, over time. This language may imply a lack mentality that expects invisible and embodied characteristics to be easily observable and categorically namable in the brief moments of an observation window.

A teacher's disposition, or way of *being* in the "doing" of teaching, is not just a complex concept; it is inherently paradoxical. On one hand, dispositions are both invisible yet visible at the same time. They are invisible in that they are often described as *inner* commitments, convictions, beliefs, or habits of thought and action (Murrell et al., 2010). Examples of such inner commitments are "being a learner of diversity," "having a relentless belief in the potential of culturally and linguistically diverse youth," a "conviction to co-construct knowledge with students," "a willingness to accept, embrace, and navigate the complexity of teaching and learning in collaboration with others," and "a persistence in advocating for students and their families" (Murrell et al., 2010, pp. 29-30). These inner commitments are invisible because they exist within the mind and heart of a teacher, yet they are powerful inner thought and feeling constructs that propel and motivate one to act intentionally and purposefully in and on their external world.

Teacher dispositions like the ones Murrell et al. (2010) describe above are made visible and manifest as the by-product of a teacher's intentional and active reflexive engagement in her inner world by raising her conscious awareness of her limited perspectives of the self, situation, and another. Crossing thresholds from lack of awareness to awareness requires passionate engagement. As teachers engage in this inner invisible consciousness raising work, they are learning about who they are and who they

want to *be*. This heightened self-awareness is a key component of dispositional actualization. If a teacher does not know who she is or has never been provided the opportunity to explore who she desires to *become*, it becomes more challenging, if not impossible, for her to know who she wants to *be* as a teacher. The inner threshold crossing process creates the space for teachers to explore "definitions of themselves, how they interact with other people, how they understand themselves publically and privately, how they control their lives, how they learn, and how they act morally" (Sockett, 2012, p. 33).

Teacher dispositional growth and self-actualization is never complete; it is a recursive process of raising one's conscious awareness over and over again in the new moments one finds oneself. "[T]he self is a process. It is an experiential process that is subject to constant change. We enact a self in the process of awareness, and this self comes and goes depending on how we are aware" (Thompson, 2015, p. xxxi). Teacher dispositional actualization operates similarly to how Thompson (2015) refers to the nature of the self. Dispositional actualization appears to be process-oriented, in constant flux, and is enacted in the process of increasing self-awareness and critical consciousness. The manner in which a teacher moves through the threshold crossing from lack of awareness to awareness, from stress to self, and from self to other, also depends on *how* she is aware. It appears throughout the phenomenological material in this study that the heart must be passionately engaged to courageously traverse thresholds that invite one into her greatest possibility and potential for growth and self-actualization as a teacher.

> It is a lovely testimony to the fullness and integrity of an experience or a stage of life that it intensifies toward the end into a real frontier that cannot be crossed without the heart being passionately engaged and woken up. At this threshold a great complexity of emotion comes alive: confusion, fear, excitement, sadness, hope. It is wise in your own life to be able to recognize and acknowledge the key thresholds: to take your time; to feel all the varieties of presence that accrue there; to listen inward with complete attention until you hear the inner voice calling you forward. The time has come to cross. (O'Donohue, 2008, p.49)

It may be inferred that teachers who are healthy and well along the domains of embodiment— mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual— are more capable of feeling all their emotions at these thresholds so to connect with that passion and courage that are

critical invisible forces of energy to assist them in their dispositional growth and self-actualization. Teachers whose hearts have atrophied as a result of the process of burnout taking root in their minds, bodies, and spirits are at a significant disadvantage in *becoming* the teacher they have the potential to *be*. For the heart is what generates the passion and courage necessary for threshold crossing into becoming more *of* and more *than* one's self in one's calling as a teacher.

The way we perceive and conceive of teacher dispositional growth and its connection to the holistic emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual well-being of our teachers is important. If we want to intentionally cultivate humanizing dispositions in our teacher candidates and practicing educators, we must hold the space and provide the support and mentoring for the thoughtful reflection on practice that encourages teachers to go inward into the self with courage and conviction and engage with their own *being*-ness and infinite potential for *becoming.* A compassionate, present, and caring teacher educator who understands the complex and uncomfortable inner process of moving from lack of awareness into new territories of spirit (i.e., heightened awareness) and walks alongside new teachers as they engage their own *becoming* "model[s] that same integration and growing depth of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that we [seek] to develop in our candidates" (Murrell Jr. et al., 2010, p. 2).

Conclusion

"The way out is in" (Hanh, 2013). An alternative perspective for addressing the challenges of conceptualizing, cultivating, and monitoring teacher dispositional actualization and holistic health and well-being is manifesting. This perspective re-imagines a different way of conceptualizing and conversing about the elusive and invisible inner work that constitutes *becoming* a teacher and its direct alignment with the physical enactment and embodiment of *being* a teacher. This study illuminates the myriad ways a teacher's *being*-ness in the present moment entangles with her trajectory of *becoming* her most authentic, radiant, and passionate self *through* her calling. In order to meet the inevitable stressors inherent in the profession with resilience and persistence, our teachers need to *know* deep down in their very *being*-ness that *they* are their greatest teacher and healer. As our attention shifts inward into the self to acknowledge the contingent, recursive, and circular process of a teacher's inner *becoming* and the ways

this inner *becoming* is intricately intertwined in the external embodiment her emotional, mental, and spiritual well-*being*-ness, we gain insight into how to strategically support and prepare our nation's greatest resource for the courageous and commendable inner *and* outer work their spirits called them to engage.

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